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ABSTRACT

This volume is part of a series of monographs from Australia devoted to outlining an alternative approach, based on neo-Marxist concepts, to policy studies in education. The opening essay in this volume argues that the controversy over inequalities in education is essentially a school-level issue, involving what administrators and teachers do with children in schools and classrooms, including the formulation of curricular goals. The essay begins with an analysis of inequalities in Australian life, followed by discussions of the competing definitions of "equality" and the ideology of inequality, along with explanations of inequalities in education and the relationship of education to class, family, and society. The essay concludes with schematic suggestions aimed at contesting the logic of schooling as it is. The latter half of the volume consists of five readings by separate authors: (1) "Education and the Structure of Opportunity," by Philip Robinson; (2) "Explaining Inequality," by Brian Abbey and Dean Ashenden; (3) "Explaining Inequality: A Reply to Abbey and Ashenden," by Don Edgar; (4) "Education: Back to the Drawing Board," by David Bennett; and (5) "Successful and Unsuccessful Schools: A Study in Southern Auckland," by Peter Ramsay and others. An annotated bibliography is included. (TE)

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The inequalities debate: an interpretive essay

Richard Smith

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ESA842 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS

ESA842 Policy development and analysis

The inequalities debate: an interpretive essay

Richard Smith

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Series introduction

The series of monographs of which this volume is part is devoted to providing an outline to an alternative approach to policy studies in education. The dominant tradition in policy studies has clearly been that of functional analysis based upon essentially economistic conceptions of education. Moreover, policy development has been seen largely as something done by experts and imposed by administrators on a somewhat recalcitrant education system. It is our view that such a conception of policy development and analysis seriously misrepresents the nature and activities of education systems.

While there can be little doubt that a conception of education as a *production* system is widespread, and that such a conception implies that industrial corporate management techniques are appropriate, it is becoming clear that education is also a *cultural* system that involves not only the learning of basic life skills but also systems of meaning, aspiration, and purpose through which notions of personal and social identity are articulated.

Education systems display both the diversity of approach to these issues evident in the wider society and also a degree of autonomy from other institutions. These characteristics ensure that education systems have become, as Bowles and Gintis suggest, laboratories in which competing solutions to the problems of personal liberation and social equality are tested, and the arena in which social struggles are fought out.

Collectively these monographs attempt to explore some of the dimensions of these struggles in Australian education. Beginning with a formulation of a critical theory of policy development and analysis, the series continues with a historical examination of various federal initiatives on educational policy which is followed by an analysis of the equality debate. Against the theoretical background provided by the first three monographs, a number of key policy issues are examined. These include the current crisis in relations between youth, schooling, and work; gender and schooling; and multiculturalism. We hope, in the future, to add further monographs on such issues as examinations, certification, and credentiation; curriculum policy; the role of minors in policy formation. Each will be set within the context of the struggle to create an equitable, just, and humane education system as a contribution to the development of a society that exhibits these qualities more strongly.

F. Rizvi

Fazal Rizvi
Course team chairman

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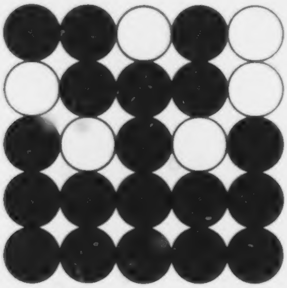


Introduction

The 'inequalities controversy' is not only a series of isolated arguments and counter-arguments but is also a controversy complicated by multidisciplinarity with its contributors ranging through disciplines such as economics, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, education and social work (Troy 1981). Such a diverse field is quite daunting, not to mention the plethora of research findings and the host of contested concepts and theories (Jacob 1981). Concepts such as 'equality' are historical and have changing meanings and purposes determined by their era and circumstances.

Factors such as these make a comprehensive coverage of the inequalities controversy domain an impossibility within the brief limits of an essay. Nevertheless, the issue is central to much contemporary educational policy-making, theorising and practice. As such it is of crucial importance that school administrators, teachers and others working within education spend some time and effort in tracking through some of the ideas and implications that are embedded in the inequalitities controversy.

It was decided early in the writing of this essay that to attempt to cover the major educational and more general equality debates and research findings (for example IQ, class, gender, rural/urban, race) would only duplicate more systematic existing work (see for example Hurn 1978; Western 1983). This essay therefore draws on existing work to highlight certain issues in the hope that teachers and educational administrators will be moved to read more widely, and above all, be moved to do something about inequalities within schools.

I wish to argue the case that the inequalities controversy in education is a *school* issue. That is, it involves what administrators and teachers do with children in schools and classrooms, including the formulation of curriculum ends. This position may seem extraordinary against the background of recent work in the sociology of education represented by the work of Bernstein (1977), Bourdieu & Passeron (1977), Bowles & Gintis (1976), Althusser (1971) and Hall (1977), and other work which focuses on the social structure in a wider framework than that of education (see Bates 1983). However, let me be quite precise about my direction. It is a simple matter to be diverted into discussions of political economy when discussing schooling and to some degree being numbed into inaction by the complexities of school/society 'links', 'reflections', 'homologies', 'correspondences', and the other metaphors that abound. The conditions of existence for schooling (as I will try to show) are of course beyond the school in a sense, but it is in school that children and teachers together adapt to 'outside' pressures and build a school culture which is the site for the creation of educational inequalities. For educationalists it is the ground on which they work that has to be transformed in order to counter educational inequalities, no matter how deeply they feel the effects of politics and economy, and work towards a more general social transformation in other spheres. To do otherwise is a dereliction of duty, even within the existing liberal rhetoric of schools and syllabuses, let alone according to other philosophies that teachers and administrators might hold.

This is not an argument, incidentally, for perceiving the school as being insulated from wider social influences and determinations, some of which will be identified in this essay, but is rather a recognition that the school is a site of production as well as reproduction and as such might constitute a source of resistance to the pressures felt by everyone involved in education in the 1980s.

Before proceeding, I want to sample inequalities in different spheres of Australian life so that the conditions of existence for schools are established. The term 'sample' is used advisedly. Everyone's shopping list of inequalities is somewhat different. For a more systematic survey, readers are referred to Western (1983).

Inequalities in Australian life

Here I want just to indicate that the concept of Australian society as an egalitarian one is a myth.

The *Courier-Mail*, a Brisbane daily, reported on the 17th September 1983 that the 'rich get a bigger bit of the cake'. The report went on to say: 'The saying that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer is borne out in estimates released by the Statistics Bureau yesterday' (p. 1). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (1983) figures indicate vast discrepancies in the way in which income is distributed in Australia. For example, the top 10 per cent of income recipients in 1982 received 29 per cent of all income in comparison with the bottom 20 per cent who received 1.9 per cent. These figures show a change from 1978-79 when the figures were 27.8 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively.

In addition, the breakdown of figures by gender shows further discrepancies from the ideal of 'equal' incomes. While the median annual income for males $12 493, it was $4092 for women. Yet, and this should be pondered, the top 10 per cent of males received 25 per cent of income while the top 10 per cent of women recipients received 31.4 per cent of income and the bottom 20 per cent of males received 3.6 per cent. Fifty percent of Australian income recipients earned less than $7410 while the average income was $9656.

If the source of income is taken into account, the advantages accruing to males are emphasised. Thus, for wage or salary earners, males received an average annual income of $16 910 while women received $10 852. For those persons working in their own business, trade or profession, males received an average income of $13 301 and women $9888.

The figures become even more stark when incomes of people derived from government cash benefits are considered. Table 1 shows the comparison between such monies.

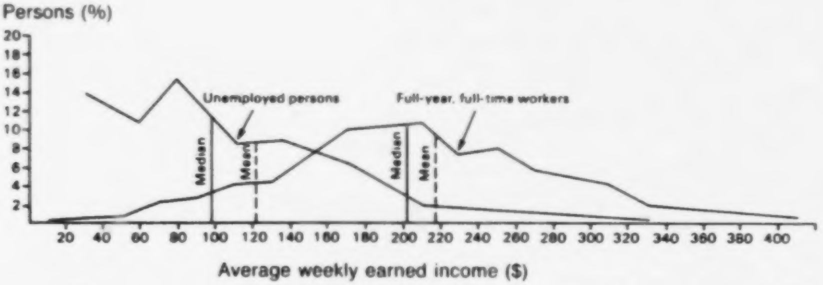
The unemployment benefit (paid to some 353 500 persons) is particularly informative when it is noted that some 260 500 of the unemployed are aged 18-34. This age group, which encompasses people starting out to build their lives and those with young families, must survive in a society geared to consumption patterns aimed at those vastly more wealthy. In addition, there is an argument that unemployed persons are drawn disproportionately from low wage earning segments of the population. This can be seen in Figure 1, and represents a double disadvantage.

Table 1. Mean weekly income of persons whose principal source of current income is government cash benefits

	Male ($)	Female ($)	All ($)
Age, invalid and wife's pension	77.97	76.85	77.26
Supporting parent's benefit, widow's pension	127.98	111.37	111.77
Unemployment benefit	87.36	56.43	79.37
Sickness benefit	117.82	86.19	102.49
Service, disability or war widow's pension	119.45	119.41	119.84
Other cash benefits	93.01	34.12	36.99

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 16 September 1983, Table 8.

Figure 1. Earned incomes—full year, full-time workers and unemployed persons



Source: P. Whiteford, 'The earned incomes of the unemployed', *Social Security Journal*, AGPS, Canberra, 1982, p. 42. Values derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Income distribution, Australia, 1978–79'.

A common summary measure of income inequality is the Gini coefficient. This index indicates the difference between the income individuals actually receive and that which they would have received if incomes were distributed equally. It ranges between values of zero and one, or perfect equality and complete inequality respectively. Gruen & Gallagher (1983) argue that there is little doubt that the 'seventies have witnessed a substantial decline in inequality among individual income recipients', based on Gini coefficients. For example, the coefficient of 0.47 in 1968–69 declined to 0.44 in 1978–79. But the 1981–82 figures show a return to 0.47, an increase in the degree of income inequality.

But Gruen & Gallagher (1983) go on to predict the already noted decline in the relative share of the bottom 20 per cent of Australian income recipients. They point to factors in the economy such as the relative decline in lower incomes, the indexing of social security pensions to the consumer price index rather than community incomes and the consequent erosion of per capita disposable incomes, and rising unemployment. More importantly, they raise the notion that Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures are probably under-estimates in so far as tax avoidance and fringe benefits for the self-employed higher income earners probably mask the true extent of income inequality. For example, the well-off have access to tax concessions and benefits which attach to employment positions.

These include the well known 'total remuneration packages' covering items such as housing allowances, low-interest loans, free household goods, medical benefits, education expenses to educate children in private schools, entertainment, telephone and travel allowances. These schemes, because they 'save' tax for individuals, increase the burden for others and exacerbate differentials between low and high income recipients. It is estimated that such tax 'savings' represents a net loss in government revenue to some $7000 millions a year or $23 a week per tax-payer (*Choice* 1982, p. 372).

Tax avoidance (i.e. legal evasion) schemes are not generally available for Pay As You Earn (PAYE) taxpayers. The self-employed and companies are able to implement procedures that obscure their financial dealings. At least one quarter of the top 120 companies in Australia have branches in 'tax haven' countries. A consequence of artificial and contrived tax avoidance schemes is that the company tax component of the Commonwealth tax revenue has dropped from 20 per cent in 1961-62 to 13 per cent in 1981-82 while personal income tax has increased from 38 per cent to 56 per cent in the same period (*Choice* 1982, p. 373). If people who receive low and moderate incomes spend a higher proportion of their income each week than people on higher incomes, it is not difficult to appreciate that about 80 per cent of Australian households lose about 30 per cent of their income in indirect and direct taxes. Of the poorest 10 per cent, something like 40 per cent of income was lost to taxes in 1975-76.

It can be argued that most of the direct cash transfers in the form of pensions and allowances reach those most in need. But it is not true of the amount spent on services such as education, health, housing, urban and regional development, culture and recreation (the 'social wage'). These services are essential for the 'life chances' of lower income individuals and groups but their equalising effects are 'blurred' by the higher usage made of them by the privileged (Ternowetsky 1979). It can be seen in Table 2, that the value of the social wage is declining.

Table 2. Movement in the social wage 1976-77 to 1981-82 (in $1 000 000)*

	1976-77	1981-82	Difference	%
Education	3481	3341	- 140	- 4
Health	4005	2912	- 1093	- 27
Social security and Welfare	10028	11498	+ 1470	+ 15
Housing	865	458	- 407	- 47
Urban and regional development	417	77	- 340	- 82
Culture	405	483	+ 78	+ 19
Total	19201	18769	- 432	- 2
Industry assistance and development	326	917	+ 591	+ 181
Total commonwealth outlays	37996	41339	+ 3343	+ 9

* expressed in 1981-82 dollars
Source: *Choice*, October 1982, p. 373

At the same time, as I have noted, personal income tax has increased.

These figures should be seen in an historical time frame. Berry (1977) for example shows that from 1922-73 the lowest 30 per cent of income earners in Australia have quadrupled their share of total income, while the proportion going to the top earners has fallen. But the greatest changes occurred before 1943 and only the share of the top 2 per cent has decreased (Berry in Ternowetsky 1979, p. 18).

The distribution of wealth, rather than income in Australia, exhibits the same general patterns. Wealth includes command over resources, property and assets. Podder & Kakwani (1971) have shown that the richest 20 per cent of the population owns 54 per cent of the total wealth, while the poorest 20 per cent owns but 1 per cent. Raskall (1978) detailed this distribution thus: the top 1 per cent owns 22 per cent of personal wealth; the top 5 per cent owns 46 per cent; the top 10 per cent owns almost 60 per cent; the top 5 per cent owns more than the bottom 90 per cent. Western (1983) reviews evidence to show that Australian company shareholdings are similarly in the hands of a few. Western (1983) states that no matter what the data source 'there are marked differences in the wealth of the Australian population' (1983, p. 46), while Ternowetsky remarks that in the 20 years' period 1955–75, 'this pattern is exacerbated, rather than reversed, by economic growth' (1979, p. 23) despite the ameliorative effects of redistributive taxation. Ternowetsky concludes that increasing income inequality is 'intrinsic to the capitalist mode of production' (1979, p. 23) an issue to which I will return in one form or another at various points in this essay.

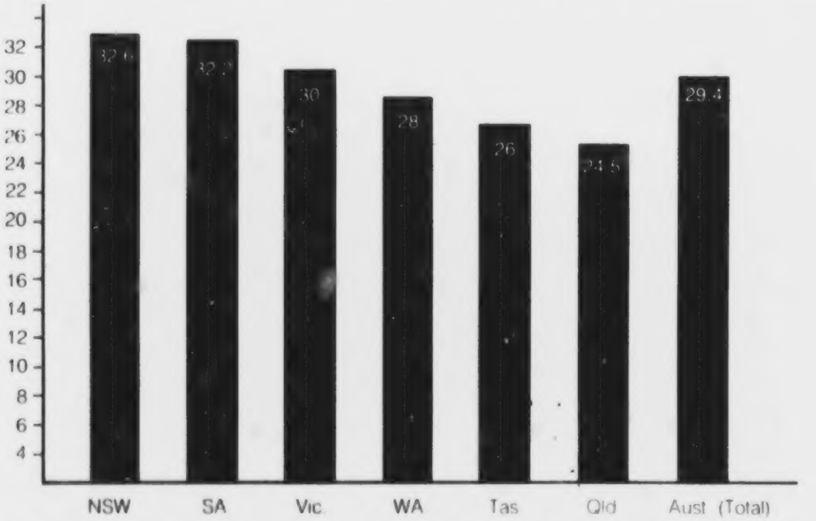
I have already touched on the differential distribution of income between men and women. As a further descriptive device, this exemplar can be extended to show other gross inequalities between men and women.

It has been documented that high status professions are the preserve of men (ABS Census 1976) whereas women cluster in occupational categories of lesser influence and are less likely to be employers or self-employed. Women are under-represented in the higher divisions of the Commonwealth Public Service and in tertiary education less than 2 per cent of professorial positions are held by women. While over half of academic men hold positions of senior lecturer and above, nearly two-thirds of academic women are in junior positions (Western 1983, p. 153). At the University of Queensland in 1983, for example, of 105 professors, 5 are women; of 498 readers and senior lecturers, 30 are women. Women are predominantly at the level of tutor, a position which is increasingly temporary. In the administrative section of the university, of the top eleven administrative positions (including vice-chancellor, legal officer, administrative officers and so on), none are women. The largest groups of women are employed as clerk-typists and cleaners (hourly rate).

While it is possible to extend the evidence that women have a similar status in other societal institutions, it is sufficient here to put the question posed by Mercer, namely, how it is that 'more than half the population of Australia, let alone the women of the rest of the world, have been made to accept such an inferior position without physical coercion' (1977, p. 476).

The provision and outcomes of education can be seen to follow the trends noted in the previous discussion. The expenditure by the states on education shown in Table 3 varies so that, in so far as provisions are concerned, some children are more favourably disposed.

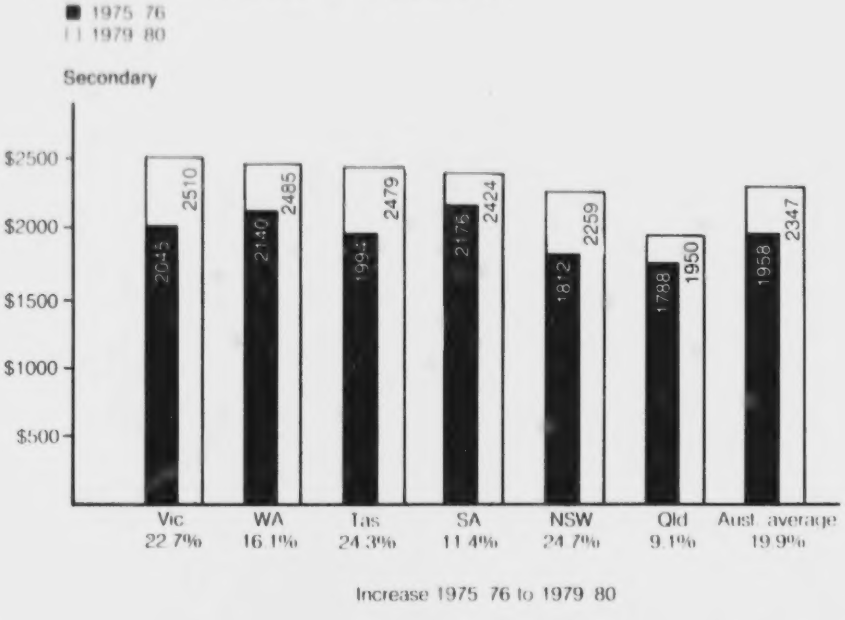
Figure 2. Proportion of state budgets spent on education



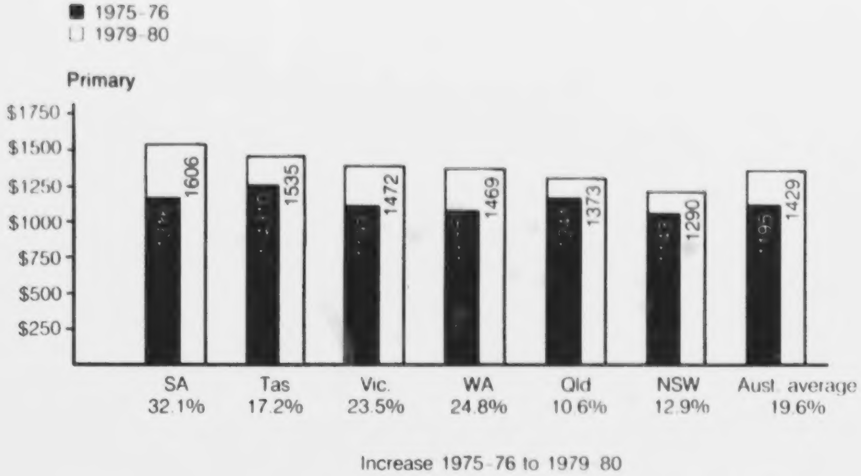
Source: *Queensland Teachers' Journal*, vol. 6, no. 12, 1983. Values derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Expenditure on Education, Australia'.

Further, per student expenditures vary not only between states but also between primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Figure 3 shows the primary and secondary figures.

Figure 3. Recurrent expenditure per pupil



Secondary



Source: *Queensland Teachers Journal*, vol. 6, no. 12, 1983. Values derived from Commonwealth Schools Commission, 'Recommendations for 1983', Table 7.

Retention rates for different kinds of schools vary as Table 3 shows.

Table 3. Retention rates to year 12 of secondary schools, 1969-80

	Public		Catholic		Non-Catholic		All
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males and Females
1969	25.4	20.4	37.8	22.8	95.5	65.6	27.5
1972	30.2	24.8	41.7	29.3	94.6	78.3	32.4
1975	28.4	28.8	45.9	36.4	89.6	86.7	34.1
1978	27.0	32.3	44.4	42.0	83.8	87.4	35.1
1980	25.2	31.9	45.6	44.1	86.4	89.5	34.5

Source: Adapted from D. W. Anderson & A. E. Vervoorn, *Access to Privilege: Patterns of Participation in Australian Post Secondary Education*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1983, p. 46.

Clearly, government schools have less holding power than Catholic or other independent schools.

The kinds of students, identified by biographical attributes, vary across the three kinds of schools as shown in Table 4. It is clear that there is a gradation in the social status of students from government, through catholic to independent non-catholic schools.

The same pattern is found in Poole & Simkin's (1976) data on the social and educational characteristics of Victorian school students. It is a characteristic of Australian schools that has been reported in the literature over many years.

In relation to outcomes, students from government schools have lower average results than their peers in catholic and independent non-catholic schools (Gilmour & Lansbury 1978, p. 56; Keeves 1975a). Further, they receive fewer Commonwealth secondary scholarships, and obtain proportionally fewer tertiary education places, particularly in high-status faculties.

Table 4. Distribution of occupations of fathers of male and female school leavers, by type of school

	Government		Catholic		Other		All	
Father's occupation	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Professional, technical, employer—managerial	27.5	26.8	37.1	35.1	66.7	72.8	31.5	31.4
Clerical—administrative, sales—clerical	12.5	12.3	16.1	16.5	9.7	10.0	12.6	12.6
Skilled manual Semi-skilled—skilled	19.6	19.2	16.9	16.4	5.9	5.2	18.2	17.7
Unskilled—semi-skilled	26.9	27.6	18.5	21.0	4.5	4.0	24.4	25.0
Unemployed or unknown	13.5	14.1	11.4	11.0	13.2	8.0	13.3	13.3
Total number	46735	43573	4246	6584	4529	4201	55510	54358

Source: W. C. Radford & R. E. Wilkes, *School Leavers in Australia*, ACER, Melbourne, 1975, p. 60.

The difference in outcomes is exemplified in the distribution of Tertiary Entrance (TE) scores in Queensland. The Association of Public Schools (APS) schools and the other private systems in which fees are high tend to, significantly outscore state schools and the poorer private schools. The best combination of predictors for a high TE score, and entry to prestigious tertiary faculties, are: male, metropolitan (Brisbane), APS schools, science/maths subjects.

The previous section and the work of Western (1983) indicate that inequalities in Australian society are not random, but have a definite pattern across any number of social cleavages. Further, inequalities are inextricably embedded not in individuals as such but in the social practices and structures in which they engage. The exploration of inequalities must then be conducted within a social framework. I will return to this issue.

Equality—a contested term

In addressing the issue of inequalities in education, one of the immediate problems is that of definition. For a start, 'equality' and 'inequality' signal different discourses. The demand for 'equality' is more usually associated with collective attitudes and community responsibility for the powerless and a socialist or egalitarian position. 'Inequality' stresses the values of individual initiative, personal freedom and incentives, more usually associated with the dominant liberal 'meritocratic' position. The Left wishes the *domain* of 'equality' to be *expanded* by fundamental social reorganisation. The liberals wish that 'inequalities' should be *ameliorated* within the existing structures by tinkering or 'fine-tuning'. The political Right opposes both, arguing instead that inequalities are *fixed* and *internal* to human beings as a species. They not only fear a demand for more equality as an expansion of the domain of equality because it is against the interests of the privileged, but argue that equality in a wide sense is against nature and moves to achieve it oppress individual liberty. The arguments for this position can be readily identified in the rhetoric of the defence of private schools in Manne (1983) and in Overduin & Fleming (1980).

Equality requires a referrent to have meaning. It is a relatively simple exercise to counter a demand for equality by citing absurd examples in order to denigrate the demand. The claim that everyone should have absolute equality in all things at all times, a lexicographic ordering of objectives, is clearly a weak claim without criteria and referrents. More importantly, as I have already suggested, the task for educators is to define equality in the schooling process because it is there that they have some purchase.

There are a number of ways in which the *distribution* of educational resources might be conceived so that a measure of equality is achieved and which it might be argued, achieve a measure of equity. Bowman (1975) suggests this list.

1. Equal amounts of schooling for each individual. (This implies equal resources and inputs such as expenditure.)
2. Equal minimum levels of performance at school for individuals.
3. Equal levels of performance for individuals.
4. Equal opportunity of access for individuals to fulfill their potentialities.
5. Equalising the marginal ratio of added learning to inputs for each individual.
6. Ensuring that individuals receive the schooling appropriate for the fulfilment of potentialities.
7. Proportional representation at each level of education for all relevant categories.

(Bowman 1975, p. 74)

Such a list, discussed in Tyler (1977), raises the issue of 'fairness'. Equity, justice, equality and fairness are related terms. Given the distribution of educational usage of resources, the question of fairness or equity is a central issue. Rawls (1971) proposes the 'difference principle' as a criterion for deciding the justice of distributing social goods and services.

> All social primary goods—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favored.
>
> (Rawls 1971, p. 303)

Le Grand (1982) argues for the principle of choice as a means for deciding what is fair. That is, he proposes that a given distribution of a social good or service is unfair depending on the degree to which the distribution is an outcome of individual choices.

These two positions are open to criticism. The Rawlsian grammar is seen to be procedural and ahistorical in the sense that it is concerned with the existing bourgeois social arrangements. Both require the existence of an outside referee as it were, to decide what is fair and unfair. Both refer essentially to individuals.

Nevertheless, the 'difference principle' implies redress for past injustices so that it can be read as being more than a distributory principle. Both positions can quite easily be applied to groups rather than individuals.

Le Grand's position has an added critical edge. If educational inequalities can be demonstrated as being beyond the control of individuals or categories of individuals, then the degree of unfairness can be empirically demonstrated. This is a significant move because the question of equality and the related notions of justice and equity are often thought to be a matter of personal values, that is, relative to the observer.

I wish now to consider more closely the ideas of 'equality' and 'equality of opportunity'. Equality as a notion is difficult to operationalise because it has a range of meanings. In addition, the contrasts between individual and group-based equalities create problems of equity. This is particularly so when equality in one sphere interferes with equality in another.

These issues and those canvassed in what follows are not inconsequential for teachers and administrators. If there is one organisational feature that characterises schools, it is the emphasis on individuals at the level of rhetoric and the grouping of students for organisational efficiency in practice. These two facets of school life are in considerable tension. I begin with the question of, equality for whom?

In Queensland, for example, the demand is often voiced for 'one-person-one-vote'. This is another way of saying that there is a class of individuals defined as Queenslanders each of whom has the same right to vote and the vote of each contributes the same 'weight' in an election. (Let's ignore the 'weighted' electorates.) Any and every pair of individuals is equal in respect to voting rights. In other words, the emphasis is on defining a class of equal (in some attribute) individuals. It is clear that the class is defined inclusively for legally defined Queenslanders and excludes others not so defined, such as Tasmanians.

While the principle of inclusiveness is equalitarian, implying a greater degree of equality than exclusive definitions, it also implies a more generalised central control. For example, inclusiveness of welfare provisions transcends decentralised governmental services. Indeed inclusive principles such as moral imperatives, transcend political boundaries thus creating dilemmas for those who espouse or wish to implement them. It is also the case that inclusiveness and exclusiveness are relative to contexts. The class of 'all men' is inclusive in one context but exclusive in relation to the class of 'all persons'. The very definition of a class, a common policy dilemma, is often difficult but it is frequently more difficult to identify members. Yet this step is essential in the translation of rhetoric into practice.

The idea of equality is complicated when classes are segmented and the demand is for equality within sub-classes. For example, the class of graduates may be divided into higher degree and bachelor's degree holders. The members of each sub-class may be seen as 'equally unequal' as is the case with military and public service hierarchies, credentialling, tax and welfare systems and so on. Segmental equality of this kind is the essence of hierarchical power and authority that systematises inequality. School systems are hardly an exception.

A further way of conceiving equality is that which demands equality between sub-classes. For example, imagine that it is possible to insist that the sub-class of male students and the sub-class of female students at year 12 should achieve the same mean scores in mathematics as a fulfilment of equality. While this demands equality extending between the classes, it does not ensure equality of individuals within each sub-class. By way of further example, consider Table 5 which shows perfect sub-class equality of imaginary private (P) and state schools (G) in terms of income units. Consequent on demands by reformers for greater equality in levels of assistance, the money is reallocated so that each sub-class has the same median value (individuals 3, 8). Thus sub-class equality is achieved but within each segment the inequalities between individuals are now severe.

Table 5

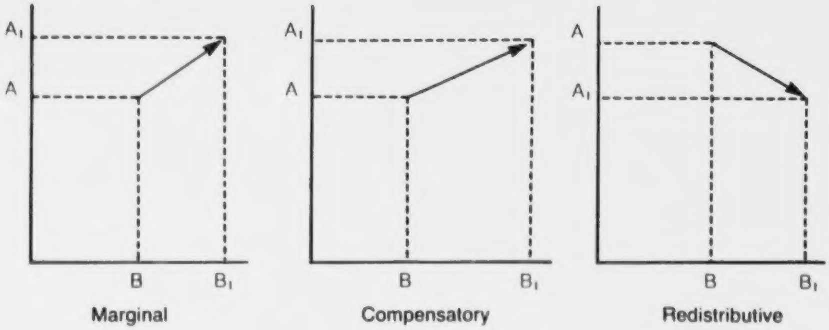
Persons	School	Money Units	Reform
1	P	10	23
2	P	10	15
3	P	10	5
4	P	10	4
5	P	10	3
6	G	5	9
7	G	5	8
8	G	5	5
9	G	5	2
10	G	5	1

This example, contrived as it is, signals an important policy dimension of equality between defined sub-classes, namely that where a number of inequalities exist (e.g. gender, race, class, and so on), action in favour of one may be inconsistent with, indeed, may even exacerbate inequalities in one or more of the others.

It is apparent from this discussion that there is a tension between a 'demand' for equality in some area, and the availability of resources to 'fulfill' that demand. Typically, demand and resources originate in different parts of the social structure, but given the role of governments, particularly the Commonwealth, the two might coincide. The content of what is demanded is often the key issue for educational administrators, whether the demand is localised or from a more generalised source such as 'the department'. It is not difficult to imagine that 'demands' can often be beyond the resources of a school or a school system to fulfill. Part of the dilemma in dealing with radical critiques of schooling, for example, is that the demands in relation to equality are broad and in a strong sense beyond the resources of a school or system. That is, 'Equal what?' is a key administrative and practical question.

For the purposes of this essay, let us define three kinds of equality. First there is that equality which is marginal in the sense that it leaves untouched the beginning state of the recipients. Per capita educational expenditures are an example; everyone gets the same increment. Second, there is compensatory equality in which individuals, groups or sub-classes are raised to some end-point equal to other individuals, groups or sub-classes by the addition of an unequal compensatory increment. Third, there is redistributive equality in which an initial advantage enjoyed by individuals, groups or sub-classes is withdrawn and re-allocated to disadvantaged individuals, groups or sub-classes. These possibilities are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Equalities



A, B = individuals or groups

Source: Adapted from D. Rae et al., *Equalities*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981, pp. 52-3.

Much of the debate discussed in other parts of this essay is concerned with the logic of these diagrams. The marginal logic leaves the status quo untouched, based as it is on the 'rights' of people to be treated 'equally'. The compensatory case attempts to redress anomalies, but leaves the underlying structures more or less untouched (see Marginson 1983b). Redistribution however implies intervention on the part of the state and is a far more radical perspective. Part of the current debate about educational goals and resource allocation generally is precisely about the status of 'rights' in the market-place, the marginality of liberal reformism and revolutionary solutions to social and economic problems.

I wish now to focus more clearly on the orthodox slogan 'equality of educational opportunity'. Bennett (1982) has quite rightly argued that the ideology of inequality is encapsulated in the slogan as it has come to be used in Australia. Before going on to discuss 'equality of educational opportunity', it is necessary to pause briefly in order to state the fundamental tenets of what might be called the ideology of inequality.

Ideology of inequality

In its most general form the ideology of inequality relates to all possible forms of inequality at a societal level. Davis & Moore (1945) argue that some positions in society are functionally more important than others and require particular skills. Skills are scarce commodities and only some people have the talent to fill the highest social positions. Talent is cultivated into specialist skills by training such as education, which demands a sacrifice in time and income foregone. In order to induce people to undertake arduous training, substantial differentials in rewards must be attached to socially important positions. Inequality, such as stratification, must therefore be both functional and inevitable in society. Thus,

> a society must have, first, some kind of rewards that it can use as inducements, and, second, some way of distributing these rewards differentially according to positions.
>
> (Davis & Moore 1945, p. 243)

In this model of society, talent and motivation become *identified* within social status. If everyone has a chance, according to the rules, to win the prize in open competition with their peers, then winners (and losers) *deserve* what they have *earned*. Everyone has had an equal opportunity to fulfill their potential. People are therefore fairly allocated according to privatised skills, talents, gifts and qualifications to positions for which they are best suited.

In economic terms the argument is often stated in the form that rewards depend on productivity. Hence, economic factors such as land, labour and capital are 'equal', but their prices in the market-place are determined by supply and demand. Because different types of labour, land and capital contribute differentially to output or productivity, demand for them varies. The prices (wages) paid to labour (and any other set of factors of production) are proportional to their productivity. Inequalities in income distribution are determined by technology and effort, as the 'invisible hand' in the market-place determines conditions for maximum efficiency (Stilwell 1981, p. 83).

This position is apparently widely believed in so far as people accept that their own material conditions could be improved, but that the social structure itself is basically fair. People deserve what they have and those who have not are undeserving. Further, there is the fear of equality to the extent that it is often argued that attempts to 'engineer', or 'interfere' with the substantial degree of inequality extant (i.e. what is) will have substantial counter-effects on other social objectives such as economic growth, civil liberty and cultural diversity.

The question of whether one 'deserves' one's lot is of course central to the idea of justice canvassed above. Desert is usually attached to 'effort' in some way but in the case of inheritance by the genetic lottery, 'desert' becomes 'right'. Individuals and categories of people can hardly be said to 'control' their inheritance and consequently, access to privileged schools, high incomes or poverty or whatever. In the case of schooling, one's prospects of 'success' are decidedly influenced by factors beyond the control of the individual or group (see Tyler 1977). Fairness in relation to education is in this sense an empirically testable variable, not a matter of values.

The arguments against demands for greater equality on economic and other grounds are the grist for self-serving political and pressure group activity (Marginson 1983b). Expenditure on education, for example, is said to be a trade-off with economic growth in other areas. Redistribution of educational expenditure, for example, the reduction of government finance to private education, is said to be against the rights of those involved in such schools and ultimately an insidious move to create a culturally homogeneous (i.e. 'drab') society devoid of diversity and 'freedom to choose'.

These beliefs justify and explain society as it is. The social ranking of occupations for example, may well be a measure of the perceptions of an already existing hierarchy of dominance and subordination. The economic argument based on marginal productivity leaves untouched the contributing effects of property relations and power in the distribution of income. The emphasis on 'talent' highlights the role of education in providing skills that enhance economic productivity and technology for the benefit of all, without addressing the determinants of 'talent' itself.

Government schools in particular are steeped in such an ideology, entrenched in bureaucratic structures (Pusey 1976; Connell et al. 1982) and in their mode of operation sometimes referred to as a 'technical rationality' (Apple 1979; Bowers 1979; Giroux 1981). Teachers and administrators assist in the maintenance of these beliefs.

> Often submerged in the bureaucracies for which they work, they simply accede to what is taken for granted. Identifying themselves as spokespersons for or — representatives of the system . . . They transmit, often tacitly, benign or neutral versions of the social reality. They may, deliberately or not, adopt these to accommodate to what they perceive to be the class origins, or the capacity of their students, but, whether they are moving those young people towards assembly lines or administrative offices, they are likely to present the world around as *given*, probably unchangeable and predefined.
>
> (Greene 1978, p. 56)

What I wish to convey here is that school practices and the educational discourse that encompasses them by way of the relationships between concepts and propositions about students, learning, teaching, curriculum, organisation, discipline and so on, mask their effects. Schooling as it is presently arranged is seen as external and monolithic rather than historically created and capable of transcendence. Categories such as 'talent', 'IQ' and many others are seen as being natural rather than cultural artefacts. Schooling is seen as explicable within itself rather than as being interrelated with other educational and social practices. As I will argue later, testing is, for example, somehow separated from 'education' and its social and psychological consequences. The concealment of these and other practices of schooling as being against the interests of the majority of students marks them as ideological.

At the heart of the ideology of inequality is the general concept of 'equality of opportunity', specified as 'equality of educational opportunity' in schooling. This concept has undergone several transformations in Australia. These are suggested in Table 6.

Keeves (1975b) traces an evolution through stages from 'conservative' and 'liberal' to 'a needs concept' represented by the Karmel Report, *Schools in Australia*, (tabled in 1973). Ross (1983) uses a similar classification to show changes from restricted educational provisions to a notion of secondary education for all with increased tertiary provisions, to the idea that barriers to educational progress should be overcome.

Ross (1983) argues that Karmel (1973) presented a limited view of equality. Equality of educational outcomes for individuals and groups was rejected (Karmel 1973, pp. 22–3; McKinnon 1976, p. 10). Instead, a more limited goal was set out, namely:

> The Committee believes that schools should attempt to provide a more equal opportunity for all children to participate more fully in the society as valued and respected members of it.
>
> (Karmel 1973, p. 23)

Rather than promote the expectation that schools would foster equal educational outcomes, the Committee expressed a hope that they would contribute to a lesser goal, namely 'more equal' opportunity (Ross 1983, p. 16). The means identified by the Karmel Report were uniformity of material provisions, including a core curriculum and mastery of basic skills. The standard of schooling for all students was to be freed from

environmental influences such as family background and school type by compensatory resource allocation (Ross 1983, p. 19). The outcomes of the Karmel settlement are exhaustively discussed in Marginson (1983b) and White, D. (1973).

Table 6. Concepts of equality of educational opportunity in Australia

	19th century—World War II era	Post World War II era	Karmel Report Era
	Conservative	Liberal	Needs/redemptive
Keeves (1975b)	Secondary/tertiary education for the elite. Access to professions restricted. Scholarships for talented at private schools. Few selective government schools.	Broadening of access and curriculum at secondary/ tertiary levels. General education.	Assistance for students in ***need***. Optimal educational opportunities for all. Attempt to *overcome* disadvantages (social, cultural, economic and ethnic).
Ross (1983)	Elementary schools for basic skills. Few selective public schools. Nurture of 'talent'. Differentiated educational opportunity.	Free public secondary schools. Scholarships for able secondary/ tertiary students. Uniformity in provisions. Intelligence seen as fixed. Success/failure based on ability and industry.	Adaptation to individual needs. Compensation by schools for social background. Unequal treatment for equal opportunity. Focus on outputs.

Bennett's (1982) perception of the changing nature of the concept of equality of educational opportunity is that of the alternative goals of elevating the whole of the working class, leading to equality between classes; or of providing opportunities for bright individuals to join the middle classes, it was the latter which became institutionalised. Thus, the pursuit of equality of educational opportunity was transformed into the encouragement of '. . . individual aspirations for promotion to a higher class . . . to achieve greater income, social status and power within an unequal society' (Bennett 1982, p. 164). This occurred after World War II in conditions of economic growth during which

> **it was assumed that the purpose of the education system was simply personal advancement in material terms . . . education, like society itself, is a competition, a process which produces winners and losers. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the rules of this competition are fair—that is, that everyone has an equal chance.**
>
> **(Bennett 1982, p. 165)**

He goes on to summarise the meritocratic position, or a 'business man's concept of equality' as, 'The socially just society became one in which

talent, effort and enterprise should, and in theory do, receive the greatest rewards' (Bennett 1982, p. 164–5). Let us consider the equality of opportunity proposition more closely.

The concept of equality of opportunity contains within it distinct meanings which are nevertheless often coalesced. It can mean equality of *prospects*; that is the probability of obtaining or reaching a given state is the same for everyone. The analogue is 'chance' as represented by lottery numbers, two-up and so on. The essential point is that a person's (or group's) attributes *do not affect the result.*

The concept can also refer to the *means* used to reach a given state. Equal opportunity is provided if the same instruments, equipment and facilities are available to obtain or reach a given state. The analogue here is with sports, thus:

> Every entrant in a decathalon is scored the same system of standards; every boxer must stay within the same kind of ring and eschew the same illegal punches; every subject of an IQ test answers the same questions; every poker player draws from the same deck, forming hands with the same *a priori* odds; every weight lifter meets the same resistance to gravity. These equal means are used to demonstrate unequal speed, agility, punching power, wit, cunning, muscle—so as to create, systematize, and legitimate unequal prospects of success.
>
> (Rae et al. 1981, p. 66)

Means equality is directed towards the end of unequal prospects for success. It will be immediately apparent that there is a congruence here between the ideology of inequality and the concept of equality of opportunity. The priority of means over ends is the essence of technocratic rationality and systems management approaches to organisation, currently popular in educational circles in both administration and curriculum (Pinar 1978; Giroux 1981). Rae et al. (1981) makes the point that means equality is part of the logic of industrial and bureaucratic labour markets. Such markets require an unequal distribution of values such as Tertiary Entrance scores, amount of education and so on, because such values are indivisible. It is necessary in the ideology of inequality and the social practices in which it is embedded as we have seen, that unequal distribution of values occurs and, again, as we have seen, it is desirable in order to provide incentives, throw up 'talent', promote the collective good and enable social mobility.

If people are equal in their talents, that is differences between people are not relevant, the meritocratic model might allow a coincidence of means and prospect equality. Where this is not the case (i.e. the so-called 'real world' where the de Castella's are clearly superior at running fast over 42 km and so on), then equality of means ensures inequality in prospects. Conversely, equal prospects can only be reached via different means, a crucial but often overlooked educational policy insight and one upon which I will elaborate later.

Because equal means enables a demonstration of unequal talents within a society like Australia, the talents themselves become reified and, at the limit, become defined within the ideology of inequality as a 'natural' irreducible datum. For example, consider the social and professional use of concepts like 'ability', 'talent', 'giftedness', 'intelligence', 'bright' and so on. Of the whole gamut of human capacities, some become bench-mark criteria for judging people. What is lost in this process is a quite simple sociological fact that cultural anthropologists have known for years, namely that the transformation of nature into social categories is a product of symbolic systems. 'Natural' attributes such as 'intelligence' are mediated by the specific formulations of culture (Sahlins 1976, p. 57). To put it more bluntly, educational concepts are historically constructed, reproduced and transformed by history.

The point I wish to emphasise is that the criteria used for enabling 'winners' and 'losers' to be selected are a priori, neutral only when all candidates are equally endowed. This is precisely the concern of Bennett (1982), writing about educational and unequal talents in relation to school testing.

> Once this is admitted [i.e. socially constructed differences], the pursuit of the meritocratic ideal of matching natural ability to individual success becomes logically absurd. It also becomes apparent that there is something slightly lunatic, as well as deeply immoral, about a policy which sets out to remove the effects of social disadvantages . . . in order to ensure that some particular pre-defined proportion of the group will succeed in gaining promotion to the advantaged class.
>
> (Bennett 1982, pp. 179-80)

Means equality is marginal in the sense discussed previously. In addition, it is structured step-wise in schooling so that an individual must 'win' at each step in the process or be 'cooled out' indefinitely from the race that matters (Turner 1960). It must therefore do what Bennett castigates—create unequal pay-offs at each stage in order to allow winners access to further means for success (or failure). Reformers, who wish to achieve means equality, are doomed in the meritocratic model because if there are no demonstrable differences at each stage, the meritocratic process breaks down. Bennett (1982 pp. 178-9) is quite correct in saying that the 'core of the problem' for socialists who aspire to a 'more equal society' is the complex of competition and failure.

Unlike prospect equality, means equality does not treat individual attributes as irrelevant. Consequently, one of the greatest dangers of means equality policy is that it is pernicious in its effects on people, whose failures and successes are dependent on them (See Sennett & Cobb 1972; Lewis 1978; Connell et al. 1982). The more equality of opportunity is established as an organising principle of society, the deeper the threat to the dignity of people.

> A meritocracy is more competitive than an overtly-based class society, and this unrelenting competition exacts a toll both from the losers, whose self-esteem is damaged, and from the winners, who may be more self-righteous about their elite status than is a more traditional ruling group.
>
> (Karabel 1972, p. 43)

Let us return to Bennett's words in relation to testing. One way of judging the extent of the belief in 'equality' in schools is to observe how schools (teachers, administrators) deal with human differences. Individuals clearly differ and no one suggests that every student is the 'same'. The acceptance of differences however does not imply inequalities. The latter arises when differences are ranked as 'better', 'higher' or 'superior'. The educational criterion (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979) for identifying differences and reifying them is testing, which itself is a competition for grades. 'Talent' or 'merit' taken as a whole range of human potentialities, has been reduced to a specific set of skills centered on classroom models of learning and a narrow conception of logic. Students must provide performances in classroom learning skills that teachers rate as meritorious and performances that indicate a conceptual style measured by modern tests. Performance is set against quality and competence in a hierarchical scale (Collins 1971; 1979) and becomes a criterion for all manner of entry points to facilities, courses, schools and jobs.

As White (1983) says, in relation to the Victorian HSC as a successor to the IQ test:

> [The HSC is] the all-purpose measurer of twelve years of schooling through a single number which provides differential access to the most favoured areas of tertiary education.
>
> (White, D. 1983, p. 7)

Increasingly, the critical educational tests contain particular kinds of mathematical and verbal conundrums, tricks and sleights of hand that test the ability of the student to respond to such material. In addition, they must be completed at speed. Hacker (1980) believes that solving puzzles at speed 'as much as anything, is what tests are testing' (p. 25). Much contemporary teacher work is centred on the construction of, preparation for, and grading of tests, rather than teaching; that is differentiating categories of students in the belief that it is somehow necessary. On the one hand, it is argued that society now needs fewer workers and more people who have sophisticated numeracy skills suitable for an age of high technology, particularly computing. On the other hand, the skills and abilities identified by tests are necessary, in a technological age, so that people can be competent in their jobs and be re-trainable. Both assumptions are contestable.

Levin & Rumberger (1983) show, for example, that the total number of jobs generated in technological areas of the US economy (1978–90) such as computer programmers and systems analysts, is expected to be relatively small in comparison to unskilled categories: 'In fact, no job within high technology fields even makes the "top 20" in terms of total numbers of jobs added to the U.S. economy' (Levin & Rumberger 1983, p. 6). Their projections are shown in Table 7.

It is likely that Australian projections are similar. The advice to students that they should take plenty of science and maths courses if they want future employment prospects is narrow sighted. The tunnel vision is exacerbated by the apparent bias in testing (e.g. ASAT) towards scientific and mathematical logic and skills.

Indeed, the general conclusion of contemporary analyses is that school and tertiary learning has little effect on job performance and that most jobs skills are learned on the job (Dore 1976; Collins 1979). Blackburn & Mann (1979) in their study, for example, have shown that a large proportion of the workforce use 'work' related skills in everyday life, more than at work and that most workers are capable of learning the skills necessary for most jobs. This kind of evidence emphasises the 'absurdity' that Bennett (1982) berates. The requirements of credentialism ('gateway-ism') determined by ability to perform on tests that have little demonstrable correlation to the work situation (see Sindler 1978) is the kernel of competition and the structure of opportunity in schooling. Larson's (1977) work is instructive in this regard in so far as she demonstrates the links between 'professionalisation' and credentials. That is, equality of educational opportunity is fundamentally unjust as a principle. Why this is so has been exemplified in a host of studies, that demonstrate the lack of control categories of individuals have over their school careers.

Table 7. Employment and employment growth in the fastest growing occupations 1978–90

	Employment growth 1978-90	
Occupations	% increase	No. of jobs
Fastest relative growth *		
1 Data processing machine mechanics	148	93 000
2 Paralegal	132	38 000
3 Computer systems analysts	108	199 000
4 Computer operators	88	148 000
5 Office machine and cash register services	81	40 000
Total	105	518 000
Fastest absolute growth †		
1 Janitors and sextons	26	672 000
2 Nurses' aides and orderlies	55	594 000
3 Sales clerks	21	591 000
4 Cashiers	36	545 000
5 Waiters, waitresses	35	532 000
Total	31	2 934 000
Total all occupations	23	21 980 000

* *based on the % increase in the number of jobs created*
† *based on the number of jobs created*

Source: H. M. Levin & R. W. Rumberger, 'Silicon chips and french fries: Jobs in a high tech future', I F G Policy Notes, vol. 4, no. 3, 1983, p. 6.

The conclusion to Averch et al. (1971) that non-cognitive factors play an important part in the output of schools defined as school achievements is an important insight. Coleman et al. (1966) in a watershed study of factors within schooling that are related to educational achievement, failed to identify links between the level of resources and cognitive outcomes. Jencks et al. (1972) in a subsequent more expanded study found that while access of school resources was quite unequal, genetic and environmental inequality played a major role in producing cognitive inequalities as measured by *standardised tests.* Family background had much more influence than IQ genotype on an individual's educational attainment: 'Our research suggests, however, that the character of a school's output depends largely on a single input, namely the characteristics of the entering children' (Jencks et al. 1972, p. 256). Further, the minute-by-minute teacher–student behaviours have more effect on school achievement than reallocating resources, reassigning students or rewriting curricula (Jencks et al. 1972, p. 255).

In a later study Jencks et al. (1979) have revised the earlier position that background characteristics account for 32 per cent of the variations in occupational levels. The later estimate is 48 per cent, with both 'family' and 'education' being identified more strongly as determinants of educational outcomes.

Getting ahead in the meritocratic model of schooling means gaining access to a highly paid job in the professions or in corporations, or being adept as a self-employed entrepreneur. The number of such jobs is highly circumscribed by the contours of the economy. Table 8 indicates that the absolute chances of obtaining a high income, for example, are low, because the number of positions are limited.

Table 8. Income distribution of all income recipients

Australia 1981 82

Income ($)	Persons ('000)	Percentage (rounded)
1-4999	3918.2	40.55
5000-9999	1722.3	17.82
10 000-14 999	1734.7	17.95
15 000-19 999	1027.8	10.64
20 000-24 999	567.9	5.9
25 000-39 999	410.6	4.25
40 000-59 999	53.0	0.55
60 000 +	23.1	0.24
Median $7410		

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 16 September 1983, Table 1

In preceding discussion I have attempted to show that equality of educational opportunity defined as means equality is system maintaining in the sense that it is included within the ideology of inequality that pervades society. The criteria for educational success or failure is unfair to the extent that individuals are measured by attributes that are beyond personal and group control.

The second theme is that teachers and administrators are deeply implicated in the processes of identifying and using technocratic procedures for processing students rather than doing something else. This is the sense that I signalled at the beginning of the essay; educational inequalities occur in schools. I will return to this issue shortly.

Before doing so, it is necessary to say something counter to that conception of equality prevalent in schools and which, as we have seen, is about personal competitive performance and organisational efficiency. In my view, despite the difficulties, it is necessary to reassert a concept of humaneness in schooling; to provide a conception of what humans are and do as a yardstick for conceiving equality. To do this, I draw on the work of Lukes (1976).

Lukes (1976) argues that, human life is made possible because of the existence of human needs and capacities that must be met and realised. It is the existence of needs and capacities that demands respect, not their differential realisation or distribution. 'Needs' refers to sustenance and health and implies a minimal level for life. Beyond that, human life is dependent on three kinds of capacities namely autonomy, free and secure space for the pursuit of valued activities and relationships and the capability of self development (Lukes 1976, p. 67). The denial of respect for these capacities creates the conditions for inequality, and has far reaching consequences for the consideration of the practices of schooling. For example:

> Social existence in part determines consciouness; and the most insidious and decisive way of denying the autonomy of persons is to diminish, or restrict their opportunity to increase their consciousness of their situation and activities.
>
> (Lukes 1976, p. 69)

Again, a school fails to respect students if their private space is invaded and if it interferes, without good reason, with their inner-self, valued activities and social relationships.

Further, schools deny respect for students when they fail to develop human excellences in domains such as intellectual, aesthetic, moral, theoretical, practical, personal and social. Finally, schools deny respect for students in so far as they provide an unfavourable climate for self-development by an emphasis on grading and differentiation and organisational efficiency.

The equality of educational opportunity principle discussed earlier, quite clearly is in conflict with the implications of such notions that lead to a valuing of humanness and an equalising of rewards and privileges rather than a competition to achieve scarce social rewards. If schools do the latter, then it is conceivable that they can un-do them.

Explanations of inequalities in education

During the 1930s and 1940s explanations of inequalities in Australian education were derived from educational psychological writings, based on the notion of 'intelligence'. This attribute was considered to be relatively fixed and distributed across the population according to the normal curve. Differential educational provisions for different 'tracks' particularly the private/state school split, fitted this model of inequality. Education, as an inherently individualistic enterprise, was not widely regarded as a means for improving the life-chances of individual Australians (Anderson & Vervoorn 1983, p. 5). In addition, education was seen as the necessary ingredient for both societal harmony on the part of the masses and leadership by the privileged. The natural coincidence of heredity and social stratification meant that educational 'equality' was utopian and was anyway, 'against nature' (see McCallum 1981).

In the 1940s the work of La Nauze (1940; 1943) and Henderson (1942; 1946) in particular called the model into question by demonstrating that social background and equality of educational opportunity were related. But it was the 1960s and 1970s that generated a sustained interest in Australia and elsewhere with the causes of educational inequalities. In Australia, Roper's (1970) book set the scene, and the work around poverty provided a strong impetus (see Fitzgerald 1976).

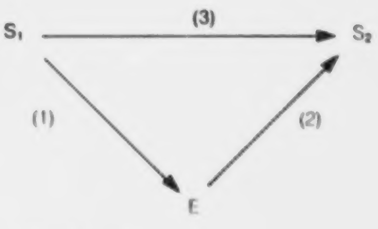
The Australian debate about the reasons and remedies for educational inequalities addresses the fundamental fact that Australian educational facilities, as I have already shown, are appropriated differentially by different categories of student. The 'two pyramids' of educational outcomes, a minority that does very well and those who get by, are contrasted with those who fail to achieve what the schools promise (Fensham 1970; Roper 1970; Australian College of Education 1968). The problem is how this educational structuring takes place, and more importantly, why it occurs. Some explanations show how the school admits already differentiated children from society and processes them according to these ready-made divisions so that they fit their future destinations. The emphasis here is on the cultural baggage that children bring with them to the school which affects their academic performance (see Sharp 1980). Another approach is that the school itself, through its structures and procedures, reinforces and maintains the initial inequalities that children bring with them. The school in this way prepares children for life beyond the period of schooling but in a way that allocates life chances unequally. Both of these approaches have been criticised as narrow and accepting of liberal assumptions about schooling and its efficacy. Other explanations point to the essential apolitical nature of much transmission of educational inequalities work by indicating that the school is deeply implicated in the maintenance of structures of dominance and legitimating ideologies (see Sharp 1980).

A major difficulty common to all perspectives on inequalities in education is that the link between 'education' and 'society' is notoriously difficult to conceptualise adequately, as the work of Bowles & Gintis (1976), Bourdieu & Passeron (1977), Althusser (1971), Bernstein (1977) and others have demonstrated. Either 'society' is 'mediated' in some way in its relationships with the processes of schooling or it is more or less directly related. Hall (1977, p. 50) provides examples from Bowles & Gintis (1976) to illustrate the problems in the use of terms such as 'reflection' and 'reflect'. These might mean 'replicated', 'parallels' or 'corresponds with'. Persell's (1977) models, shown in Figure 5, indicate more clearly the complexities of this relationship.

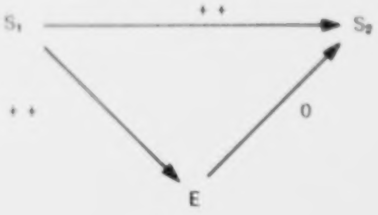
Figure 5. Varied views of how education and social inequality are related

S_1 = class or status of origin
E = education
S_2 = life outcomes—status, class or income

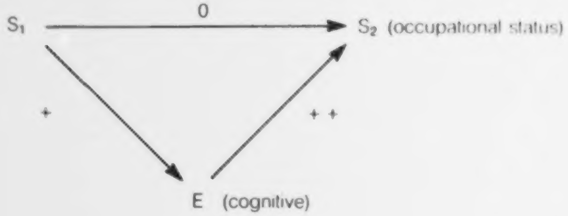
Elements in the model



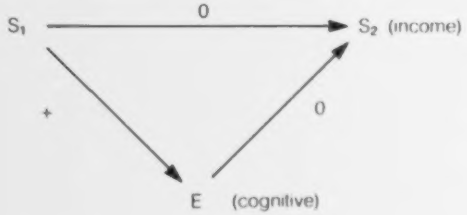
Education is 'polish' (Hollingshead 1949)



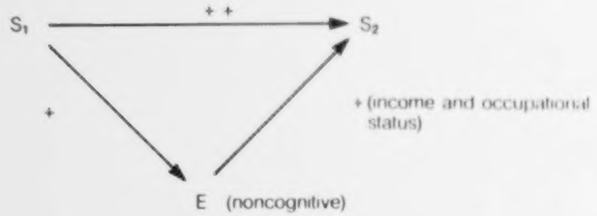
Education is instrumental (Blau & Duncan 1967)



Education is insignificant (Jencks et al. 1972)



Education is reproduction and legitimation (Collins 1971; Bowles & Gintis 1973)



Source: C. H. Persell, *Education and Inequality*, Collier-Macmillan, London, 1977, p. 154.

The difficulty is compounded by competing theoretical perspectives which have different starting points. 'Society' for example denotes 'family background', 'social class', 'socio-economic status', 'child-rearing practices' and so on. Different theoretical perspectives claim privilege in this regard and sometimes proceed without any apparent awareness of the assumptions being made (see Hall 1977; Abbey & Ashendon 1978). For example, much of the work on 'disadvantage' in education locates determinants of disadvantage in the background of students, generically defined as 'social class' or 'socio-economic status' (SES). The SES typically sums father's occupation, level of education, parental income and so on, to provide a statistical index of the position of the child's family in the status hierarchy. The measure has been found to be 'associated' or 'correlated' with levels of academic achievement, intelligence, access to higher education, educational aspirations and many other educational criteria related to life chances. Some of the tables contained in this essay are of this type (see Ross 1983, pp. 173–92).

The operational difficulty of such an index is that SES is correlated with all of the variables listed so that its relationship with any one of them is confounded. For example, if students of the same measured intelligence are grouped together, their schooling achievement scores vary according to SES. This means that SES summarises more than measured intelligence, that other variables summarised by it are independently related to achievement (Lavin 1965).

There are more fundamental criticisms of the assumptions however. The focus on social stratification according to prestige, based on style of life, consumption and occupation, concentrates on the ways in which social rewards are acquired and *distributed* in the capitalist market place. Inequalities of wealth, power, income and education then are attributable to different life chances in relation to the market. It is unclear, as it is in most SES measures, how decisions are made to divide the continuous variable 'status hierarchy' into 'classes'. In addition, the sphere of 'production' is prior to the sphere of distribution and in this sense, the emphasis on distribution of inequalities fails to indicate how they arose in the first place. Also, as Connell et al. (1982) point out, this scheme conceals the relations between the sexes, and I might add, generations, and other social divisions such as 'rural' and 'urban'. Families may well be divided internally by such divisions and the latter are not recognised in SES divisions.

Marxist accounts of class typically begin with the sphere of production. They attempt to show how, while buyers and sellers in the market are equal, the relationship between ownership and control of the means of production creates exploitative mechanisms. For example, workers in the production process create more than the value of the product measured by wages and the difference is appropriated by the owners of the means of production. Workers and capitalists are thus in an unequal antagonistic relationship which is prior to the relations of distribution. 'Class' in this scheme is essentially bi-polar and the discussion of inequalities, or indicators of the unequal relationships of production, must account for this fundamental relationship (see Abbey & Ashendon 1978). Connell et al. (1982, p. 147) finally settle for this position, 'in their swift dismissal of the idea that the "middle class" is a class in the same sense as the others' (Whitty 1983, p. 260).

The inequalities in education controversy is confounded by such theoretical divisions. The confusion is furthered by the tendency to rework conceptually, already existing data, some of which is theoretically compromised depending on the framework from which it was originally derived (Goldthorpe 1972; Turner 1977; Abbey & Ashendon 1978).

The literature dealing with inequalities in general and education in particular must then be 'read' within such frameworks. I now turn to a selective discussion of key explanatory work in the Australian debate about inequalities in education. As I have already indicated the relative salience of the centrepiece concepts of family background, class and SES, cultural inputs and educational life-chances and school structures are contested.

Knight (1974) argues that the structures and procedures of schools determine the school careers of students in a way that is beyond their control. That is, schools operate according to rules and rituals and to successfully live in them, students and teachers must fulfill certain expectations. These school features alienate some students who find them oppressive or inexplicable and in this way the school contributes to academic success and failure.

Connell et al. (1982) support Knight's (1974) case in discussing the experiences of working-class parents in government schools.

> Working-class people are often injured, insulted and disempowered by their experiences with schools . . . Among the main effects of education for that generation were that it made people feel stupid, it made them feel inferior to others who had more of it, and it showed them, at a vulnerable age, that they were despised.
>
> (Connell et al. 1982, p. 166)

D'Urso (1974) points to the 'hidden curriculum' of school as the source of such outcomes.

In addition, Knight (1974) argues, the characteristics of students are evaluated by teachers so that students can be sorted and selected. The use of procedures such as streaming and labelling based on student characteristics function to create a school status for successful and unsuccessful students. Again Connell et al. provide supportive evidence for Knight's argument. Speaking of the kids who are successful in school terms and are tracked into the academic streams, they say:

> It gives them a social identity defined by the contrast with the mass of the kids, and especially with the resisters. It treats intelligence as a badge of apartness, not as a tool of participation, conviviality, solidarity.
>
> (Connell et al. 1982, p. 172)

Knight's work draws attention to the importance of within school interaction as a determinant of school careers. The general point about Knight's analysis of educational inequalities of within school provision and educational outcomes is that it draws attention to the fact that the organisational structures and procedures of schools mould those who live in them, by working on the knowledge and behaviours brought to them. Dale (1977) for example argues that structures such as the teacher-pupil ratio, the allocation of time and space, create teacher 'problems' which must be solved. Woods (1979), Denscombe (1979) and Lundgren & Petterson (1979) show how teacher adaptation to such problems generates recurring patterns of interaction between the teacher and those taught, and that such 'normal' patterns of behaviour have definite effects.

Toomey (1974a; 1974b) explains educational inequalities, defined as scholastic attainments, by focusing on cultural capital, or skills, attitudes and knowledge which act as a 'powerful influence' upon school attainments.

His analysis is situated within a 'meritocratic ideology' assumed to be widely accepted by teachers, parents and students in which 'merit', or scholastic attainment is the best predictor of later scholastic attainment. School attainments, defined by schools as success in tests of school learning, provide an index of the student's perceived potential and right to have access to further schooling.

Cultural capital is, in Toomey's (1976), view, 'associated with, but not identical to, differences in SES' (p. 229). That is, it is created in the complex web of family interactions with the workplace, the biographies of parents and significant others (Goldman 1968; Edgar 1976). Toomey is concerned to show that class relations (SES) alone cannot account for the link between a predisposition to succeed or fail at school, as crudely represented by the summarising index SES. Rather he argues a case that 'life style' mediates the relationships between SES and scholastic attainment. Thus, early scholastic attainment is influenced by the cultural capital of the family and which, in turn, influences later scholastic attainment. Drawing on Knight's (1974) work, he makes the case that school processes, at both single school and system levels, react with early scholastic attainment. His model relates variables that are first, antecedent to school influences but which interact with school influences, and, second, those that are wholly dependent on it (Toomey 1976, p. 233). He argues that the home influences are stronger in the early primary school years but that the forms of meritocratic differentiation come to have more influence at secondary school level.

Connell (1977) is sceptical of the tradition in which Toomey writes. Whereas Toomey's model acknowledges a diversity of autonomous influences in the wider social structure that operate to determine educational success and failure, he fails to account for the whole structure of society and its differentiations (Abbey & Ashendon 1978). Hence:

> What seems more important is the learning of social practices, such as a specific style of work, and a prudential respecting of (rather than an attitude of respect for) authority and private property. The 'agency' of socialization here is, in a sense, the whole social structure which provides the rationale of these practices.
>
> (Connell 1977, p. 187)

It is in the realities of the social structure and its internal relationships that different educational expectations, hopes and wishes are acquired. That is, the class structure of Australian society determines educational outcomes, rather than 'agencies' such as the family. Thus,

> the class structure is the cause of the trouble; then there is in the final analysis only one way to cure it: by removing the cause.
>
> (Connell 1977, p. 186)

Edgar's (1976) data suggest that there are substantial differences in life-style, attitudes and values between social groups deriving from the interaction of the division of labour, the nature of authority and patterns of consumption in Australian society (Edgar 1976, p. 17). He argues that various groups in Australian society differ in their expectations of life-chances. That is,

> there are differences related to education and work experience in the extent to which people experience a sense of control through their work environment, have relative access to marketable forms of competence which open up mobility chances, and express value orientations that affect their life-style.
>
> (Edgar 1976, p. 22)

What this means is that education provides access to marketable capacities which in turn influence the mobility patterns in each generation. The degree of openness-closure of mobility patterns sets limits on the likelihood of class-awareness and consciousness emerging. Further, Edgar argues that work environments provide experience that set individuals and groups apart. In addition both individuals and groups *experience* different degrees of control over their work situations, in so far as they are controlled or control others. The type of work, and place in the hierarchical structures of authority is closely associated with life-style and levels of competence and self-competence.

This Australian debate about the causes of inequalities in education sharply outlines the complexities of the school-society couplet. It underlines the difficulties of proposing monocausal explanations of inequalities in education as well as the tensions between marginal, compensatory and redistributive notions of equality. The debate delineates the spheres of economic relationships, patterns of 'socialisation', school practices and ideology as the determinants of inequalities in education. I now turn to a discussion that dwells on ways in which these might be placated.

Education, class, family and society

One of the primary inequalities that should be addressed by teachers and administrators is the issue of outcomes and life-chances in so far as they interrogate and inform what happens in schools. There are two main reasons for this claim. First, it is this that is 'closest' to teachers and administrators in the sense that they are involved in their day-to-day work situation in helping to determine outcomes. The minutiae of everyday educational practice often obscures the seriousness of outcomes for *categories* of students. The central issue is lost in the rhetoric of education, and taken-for-granted procedures of schooling. This is why Knight's (1974) work is of central importance. But this does not mean merely addressing the 'school-work' association, important as they may be for individual students. My interest is more fundamental than that and is concerned with an awareness of the social consequences of the ends of schooling and how these are inherent in school practice. This is an ethical issue that transcends the immediateness of school life.

Second, schooling in this sense mediates the 'class' effects that Connell (1977) identifies. Toomey (1976) is correct in claiming that 'SES' is one step back in so far as economic determinants are mediated by the state (represented by the educational bureaucracy) and the subjectivities of teachers and students constituted in civil society. That is, people acquire and live by the customs, habits, conventional standards of life, skills, moral notions, family life and gender relations that compose their common sense and philosophies. Urry (1981) argues that spatial organisation, sexual division of labour, religion, ethnicity, race, associations and generational differentiation are the major interpellations of civil society. These realms of practice where subjectivities are created and reproduced together compose civil society. The latter is a condition of existence for capitalist production. This leads Urry to argue that:

> There are no pure classes determined economically—classes exist only through the precise manner in which the dominant capitalist relations, with a particular division of antagonistic functions of capital and labour, are manifest *within civil society.*
>
> (Urry 1981, p.66)

It is this insight which provides some purchase to Toomey's insistence on 'life-style' and 'family'.

Given the evidence about the influence of teacher-pupil relationships in relation to student background attributes, what schools *do* with already constituted students seems to me of central importance in the 'inequalities controversy'. What has to be grasped is that, in general, the interpellations of civil society are between economic relations and the school and that these are of central interest to teachers and administrators in their work situations.

We might add that schools do not perfectly mirror the requirements of the capitalist economy. As well as civil society mediating capitalist relations of production, Abercrombie & Urry (1983, p. 104) identify the market for different kinds of labour power as a further mediation that elaborates the importance of focusing on what schools do. Edgar's (1976) work is particularly pertinent in this regard because he is quite clearly concerned to demonstrate the relationships between place in the labour market, access to it and the affect of these on educational outcomes.

I will now outline an argument that inequalities *in education* are constructed in the relationships that exist between schools and the labour market. The centrepiece of these relationships is the credentialling function of schools, where the term credentialling refers to the on-going interdependence of internal step-by-step (grade-by-grade) distribution of merit and exit point certificates, diplomas and degrees.

Abercrombie & Urry (1983, p. 105) list three kinds of qualifications, namely 'everyone's' or literacy and numeracy; corporation or occupation specific which are relatively non-transferable; and 'general', obtained through education and certified through national diplomas. They argue that the rapid expansion of the latter in the West can be in part explained by a 'popular' demand for general education to enable mobility prospects, the existence of universities, the appropriation of education by the 'middle classes' for their own political ambitions, the need for generalist 'mental' labourers and the expansion of the state.

Allocation of merit and the possession of qualifications must be seen as gateway mechanisms that enable people to begin new races in the meritocratic model. The possession of learned skills and control over bodies of knowledge such as mathematics or history or anything else is not the point. Rather, the acquisition of forms of knowledge is generated under different conditions in schools (Toomey's split between primary and secondary schools) and between schools as students are progressively tracked into 'high' and 'low' status streams (Knight 1974; Lacey 1970; Hargreaves 1967; Anyon 1981); and more critically, the possession of knowledge is a *condition* for the existence and development of inequalities in contemporary society. That is, knowledge possession, or lack of it, characterises the distinctions that are typically embedded in rankings of occupations; in particular the separation of mental and manual work conception and execution, and quality of working conditions. Knowledge possession in this sense is a form of property that can be exploited in the labour market by its 'marketability' (Giddens 1973; Edgar 1976). Educational qualifications, like the ownership of the means of production, and the absence of both, partly but significantly define an individual's position within the division of labour.

Edwards (1979) provides a classification of the labour market. He identifies three kinds of markets. First, there are those jobs that are low-paying, provide little security and demand few skills and little education apart from minimal literacy. Work is subject to a direct hierarchical control under threat of dismissal and there are few mobility chances. Second, there are those jobs that have relatively stable employment, some possibilities for movement to equivalent jobs, higher wages, and are characterised by repetitive, routine and machine based tasks and control by technical criteria. They require relatively few specific skills. Third, there are those jobs in which self-pacing and initiative are required, career prospects are attached to jobs, general skills and usually specialised educational credentials are required and control is bureaucratic. The third group is typically composed of skilled craftsmen, management and professionals.

Edwards' classification goes some way towards defining the nature of the social relationships experienced in the work situation, in particular the degree of control exercised and experienced and the quality of the work itself. In addition, his classification in emphasising the size and source of income, the degree of job security and opportunities for mobility, defines the economic or market situation. Together these characteristics define systems of places or a realistic conception of class in Abercrombie & Urry's (1983) analysis. This is supported by Lockwood (1958, p. 208) who argues that the work situation is primarily responsible for shaping the 'psychology of the individual'. The former authors conclude that the work and market situations are interdependent criteria for establishing class position, with the work situation being dominant.

They go on to argue that between the capitalist class and the working class are the 'middle classes', and this shift is particularly important for an understanding of contemporary capitalism. The emergency of the 'middle classes' is marked by two general tendencies. On the one hand is the progressive deskilling of a large range of occupations under the influence of technocratic control mechanisms (see Noble 1979; Braverman 1974). On the other hand are shifts in the form of the capitalist class under the influence of the depersonalisation and internationalisation of capital. Formerly well established white-collar 'middle class' occupations have become deskilled, so that their market and work situation more properly places them in the working class (Abercrombie & Urry 1983, p. 118). The third group in the labour market described by Edwards (1979) composes what Abercrombie & Urry (1983) refer to as the 'service class'. They argue that the emergence of this class has effects on the structure of social inequality.

As capitalism has become depersonalised and internationalised in terms of possession, economic and legal ownership, the service class has increasingly taken on the capitalist functions of reproduction, control and conceptualisation. The work situation of capitalists has become less distinguishable from that of the service class located in bureaucracies so that service class market and work situations coincide with their capitalist functions carried out on behalf of (serving) capital.

This position raises some crucial issues for the 'inequalities controversy'. The form and substance of schooling is clearly located within a capitalist mode of production that requires functions for the continuance of the system to be performed. This is not the same as saying that schooling is determined by or on behalf of capitalists or a capitalist 'ruling class'. It's not simply a matter of dichotomising workers and capitalists. It is the service class that crucially depends on education and credentials for access to 'careers' and professions that 'serve' capitalism, and whose interests are best served by closure, rather than openness, in the credential allocation business. The monopolisation of schooling, based as I argued earlier, on a narrow conception of 'merit', is a form of exploitation (Parkin 1979). In recent years there has been an escalation of qualifications as the demands for entry into particular places in the labour market have increased. Part of the reason why such an escalation has occurred is that the service class has commandeered education in order to achieve bargaining power and control in the market. The educational interests of working-class children are counterposed against those of service-class children in state and private schools.

The kind of person as distinct from the place, recruited to the service class is also of importance because while there is vast diversity in school populations, schools select *kinds* of people (see for example Boreham et al. 1979). Earlier I referred to the structuration of civil society in which subjectivities are acquired. The attributes of persons recruited to the service class are largely determined prior to the process of school in the vast diversity of social groupings and processes of civil society. This is why Toomey's (1975) insistence on the socialisation role of the family and life-style is correct. It is also a reason why many teachers and administrators are central to the problem of 'inequality' in education. It is in the family and its network of groups (religious, political, sporting and so on) that prejudices, ideas and practices are learned in structural ways, such that separate interpellations evoke or operate as symbols for others in a unified way (Laclau 1979). Economic relations for example are infused by patriarchy, which is affected by and affects religious practice, and in turn the other interpellations of civil society. Nevertheless, there is a unity that emerges in the culture of people and families whose economic situation and other activities are roughly similar. The farm in the country (Connell et al. 1982, p. 145) and the yacht at the club seem to me to signal similar life-styles that condense in the predispositions, knowledge, self-concept and feelings of 'competence' possessed by children. It is these attributes that become indexes for assumed underlying structures that teachers and school administrators, and later employers, identify as constitutive of adequate performances and which build inequalities in education.

Teachers work with the characteristics of students; the rhetoric of education emphasises 'individual differences' and 'potential'. The complex of ideologies around concepts such as 'motivation', 'ability' and 'achievement' ensure that *personal* and *subjective* qualities are differentially evaluated. Teese (1981) has captured some of this when, in discussing 'catchment' areas and school populations, he says:

> The concentration of students alike in terms of their language fluency, their orientation to language use, their acceptance of the routines of classroom practice, of the connection between the teacher's authority and the personal utility of schooling, and of the rationality of academic learning as something already given, associates students with teachers and vice versa, and favours concentration of purpose on the formal object of the schools.
>
> (Teese 1981, p. 98)

Teachers and administrators (at all levels) are numbered in the service class by virtue of their work and market situations. Several general characteristics of teachers can be identified here, although it must be kept in mind that the teacher labour market is itself fractured. Teachers are not a homogeneous category (Robinson 1982). In fact, the dislike of teachers for unionisation and general trend of teachers' unions to operate opportunistically for short-term advantages, and their failure to organise around ends that realise their own interests and those of their clients, marks them as service class (see Offe & Wiesenthal 1980; McCallum 1981; White, R. 1983). They depend on *general* educational credentials ('education' diplomas and degrees) that emphasise rather than dissipate the contradictions between internal task-oriented skills required on the job and theoretically based 'pieces of paper' that provide power in the labour market for the possessors. Finally, much of what teachers say and do in school lies within the dominant universes of meaning of the profession and the bureaucracy itself administered by former classroom teachers. Ozolins' (1981) analysis of HSC examiners' reports makes this point very clear. Examiners in their agreement about marking criteria that lie beyond formal rules, systematically exclude certain student populations who do not have access to such criteria in their normal social experience. Thus,

> The exaltation of the outstanding personal qualities of candidates becomes an award for the most complete conformity and submission to an academic culture, rewarding those candidates who live up to its most elusive demands of manner and style. (Ozolins 1981, p. 183)

At the level of schools and classrooms this 'middle-classness' gets played out in so far as there is a relationship of openness–closure between teachers and the *local* school environment. Schools have histories and traditions; schools and catchment populations have reputations (Petrie 1981); teachers adapt to the perceived characteristics of local or catchment populations and teach accordingly (Arfwedson 1979; Connell et al. 1982; Neate 1983; Smith & Sachs 1981). That is, teachers and administrators have ready-made technical solutions for school problems that are part of the repertoire of being a teacher, or a principal. This is not to argue that everyone has the same version of such cultures but to suggest instead that despite variations there is a good deal of predictability about teacher and administrative response to school 'problems'. Not all of this predictability can be explained by the objective structures in which teachers and administrators work. As Reynolds & Sullivan (1981) put it, the phenomenological world of teachers is itself a structure that has effects in so far as when teachers have the opportunity to do other than business-as-usual, it is rare that they do. More generally, consciousness is no longer the mere product of social being, as Williams (1980) writes, but is at once a condition of its practical existence, and, further, one of its central productive forces.

There are two implications that I wish to draw from this discussion and which relate to my intent indicated at the beginning of this section. The first is that the reproductive and central functions that are attributed to schools as an outcome of how knowledge and students are processed in them, are essentially correct in their general form. These functions, however, should not be seen as totally effective and again must be considered against the historical development of the 'middle classes' and their effect on the distribution of social inequality, not merely as a reflex of antagonistic relationships between labour and capital. Far from having 'no effect' on society, schools, through the mechanisms of their practices, particularly credentialling, are central to wider social processes of deskilling and minimising non-educational achievement, and legitimating and sustaining the position of the service class.

It is important also that the heterogeneity of the 'middle classes' be firmly acknowledged if the excesses of some versions of the working-class/capitalist model are to be avoided. Civil society creates a vast hetereogeneity of *interests* that are often contradictory. People group around 'issues' in such a way as to contradict their 'class' position. There is no easy translation of 'class' and conservation, creationist science, flat-rate taxation, anti-nuclear movements and the like. This means that the local school population characteristics need to be empirically founded for policy purposes, to account for the salient structurations of local communities.

Second, the educational ideologies and practices that legitimate the meritocratic myths are in the hands of teachers and administrators, as intentional, conscious beings who have a relatively autonomous work situation. While their common sense is acquired in the interpellations of civil society, like parents and students, their professional philosophies are informed by the sedimented traditions of the occupation as a social category and the work situation. The literal meaning of pedagogical and administrative practices disguises the logic that underlies it such that it is difficult indeed to see how schooling could be otherwise, or more importantly, having diagnosed the logic, what to do about it. Any educational policy of redress then, in the interests of educational justice, must be addressed at school issues. I shall attempt this task in the final section.

Before considering a policy agenda for my stated intention in this essay, I wish first to briefly address the issue of whether schools can, in general, 'make a difference' to general patterns of social inequality. This problem is often placed in the context of the paradox of 'reform' versus 'revolution'. This paradox confronts all socialists and egalitarians who wish to fundamentally alter the schooling system and its relationships with the wider society but who nevertheless want to address issues in schooling 'as it is'.

Gorz (1973, p. 41) distinguishes a 'genuinely socialist policy of reforms' from 'social democratic' reformism. The latter is ameliorative or marginal and compensatory in the terms of the earlier discussion because reforms are ends in themselves and based finally on technocratic, managerial criteria and rationales. That is, for the government school systems (including the tertiary sector), 'reforms' by the state bureaucracy at best rationalise the existing division of labour ('demands of society') by retaining the links between specialists and functions. Such reforms are unlikely to bring changes either in schools or in society. This conclusion does not prevent Gorz from advocating reform as a transitional strategy, as long as it is not terminal in its goals. This creates difficulties because transformational work in education begins at the workplace (classrooms, schools, the principal's office, branches of the bureaucracies), each of which is organised so that its existence reinforces the very system of practices that is largely the object of contestation (see Smith 1982). The problem is particularly acute when the future of individual students in the system is the focus of reform strategies.

My position is that while schools are prefigured by the structures of society, the proper place for *educationalists* to contest *educational inequalities* in the first instance is *in* schools and their bureaucracies. Ideological realms (education, economics, family and so on) are not unitary in their effects and contradictions exist between realms as well as in them (Kellner 1978). The impact of, or lack of, changes in education on the other realms is an empirical question that should not stop educationalists seeking to bring about such changes or engaging in political activity beyond education.

It can also be added here that the work of Pedersen et al. (1978) and more recently Ramsay et al. (1983) points to the possibilities for an optimistic reading of educational work. The latter work is particularly important because it draws attention to the effects of school policy, curriculum emphases, teaching and school organisation that are generally advocated in what follows, in Marginson (1983a) and in Connell et al. (1982).

In the following discussion I draw on the work of Bahro (1978) in so far as it relates to education, to set the scene for policy particulars. Bahro argues a more general case for a 'cultural revolution' against bureaucracy, the traditional division of labour, conventional education, child-rearing practices, and the lack of community in contemporary (socialist) society.

In terms of the earlier discussion about equality and justice, equality in education must have as its first principle the breaking down of *socially determined* limitations on the educational development of students which exclude them from participation in the 'determination of general affairs' and from the 'conscious bringing about of social changes' (Bahro 1978, p. 255). The criterion for this principle is enunciated by Bahro (1978, p. 271) as a concern for 'emancipatory interests', or the growth, differentiation and self-realisation of the person in all dimensions of human activity. Young people he proposes, must be able to appropriate directly, as tools for some use,

> the means of patterning and the concepts that allow them to differentiate and synthesize both the small world and the wide world.
>
> (Bahro 1979, p. 286)

Giroux (1983, p. 288) also proposes emancipatory interests as the key criterion for a theory of resistance and a radical pedagogy. He draws attention to the difference in the logic of emancipatory interests in comparison with the structures and practices of schooling that are based on a logic of domination and submission.

Bahro's concern is to reinterpret the idea of progress, to counter the technocratic and scientific belief in the progress of science and technique. He does not suggest that areas of human endeavour such as 'science' and 'technology' are to be ignored. Rather, he argues the case that domination ('subalternity') should be countered by opening up access for all to those areas as well as other areas such as political/philosophical knowledge, language, cybernetics, artistic expression and mathematics. Further, everyone should have the possibility of access 'up to the highest functional level' (Bahro 1979, p. 273) in any area. He argues strongly for changes in child-rearing practices and the social determinants of learning that stifle the learning capacities of people who are not pathologically incapable of learning. He believes in reinstating the school teacher to a role of 'personalised, competent teaching' for a unitary curriculum that is rigorously 'academic' and 'practical'. Finally, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, he rejects the revolutionary side of Gorz's (1973) paradox.

> Work, family, school—all these must be superseded and raised to a higher level from inside, not simply destroyed. It is pure subjectivism to try and begin for example with the 'abolition' of the family and marriage, instead of adapting its internal and external conditions of existence to the new possibilities.
>
> (Bahro 1978, p. 293)

I now turn to a discussion of a selected range of external and internal conditions of existence for education in policy terms. I discuss each in turn.

External conditions

Here I wish to briefly draw attention to an increased role for political decisions that may redistribute general educational resources, and provide special resources for local initiatives. I refer to a role for the Commonwealth and state governments, in particular the former. Bahro states:

> There is scarcely any better way for a political party to indicate its attitude towards the problems of its society's development today than by the general tendency of its educational policy.
>
> (Bahro 1978, p. 284)

Despite Bennett's (1982) fears of the possible repercussions of re-igniting the 'state-aid' issue in its more dogmatic and electorally damaging forms, Australian Labor government policy should be aimed at directly creating *individual* equality of educational provisions in relation to plant, personnel and equipment. This does not *necessarily* mean reducing the level of resources available to the privileged, but the economic 'trade-off' argument suggests such a possibility. The import here is to establish equal facilities on the basis of fairness, so that the most pressing issues of what happens in the facilities can be addressed.

The distribution of educational expenditures across the states that appeared earlier in this paper strongly suggests a need for a concentrated effort to equalise expenditures on a state-to-state basis. The issue is larger than this and can only be outlined here. It concerns the interdependence of the administrative framework that reduced economic differences between public and private education under the Karmel settlement, and the social conflicts that exist between them (Marginson 1983b). Australian government spending on private education is roughly half of its education allocation, for 24 per cent of student enrolments. When state expenditures are taken into account, however, private schools receive less than the 12.2 per cent share represented by their enrolments (Marginson 1983a). 'The reality is', Marginson (1983a) says 'that funding arrangements are shifting the percentage share between the sectors. This means an inevitable transfer of resources from government schools, due to limitations on the size of the total cake' (p. 11). Given the respective social roles of private (Teese 1981; Fomin & Teese 1981) and government schools (Connell et al. 1982), if government schools stand to lose under present funding arrangements the question of equality is a central educational one. In addition, the policies of the Australian government should be directed towards a 'research' and 'development' program, in conjunction with radical regional centres, teachers' unions, parent groups and other 'community' organisations, that monitor and counter in a sustained way, the inequalities in education discussed in this paper. The Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre as well as a revamped Educational Research Development Council (ERDC) might well take on such functions, under staffing who share in the goals of such programs.

The central role of government in redressing wrongs is problematic. I have argued elsewhere (Smith 1982) that 'critical' social policy is difficult to implement or indeed, to get on to policy agendas in government bureaucracies. In addition, there is the tension between local initiatives and overall policy. The situation until now in Australian education has not been directed in an organised way to particular priorities of social justice. Consequently, the practice of schooling has evolved around the attempts of teachers in government schools to placate the demands of the academic curriculum with their clientele, with instrusions by the Schools Commission, local initiative programs and isolated 'projects' by teachers committed to more democratic goals (see Connell et al. 1982). A more widespread initiative is required and this seems impossible without a central source of funds and power such as the Australian government. Such an initiative would seem best directed at having the mass of teachers reconsider their goals and pedagogies and raising the awareness of parents of the present situation so that local initiatives can begin to address the central problems around schooling.

Internal conditions

Here I wish to make some schematic suggestions that are aimed at contesting the logic of schooling as it is. Some of these have been, or are in the process of being, tried in Australian schools. To my mind, each one of them arises from the fairness, respect notions and are directed at the idea of emancipation.

I am particularly concerned to place the focus *in* schools and *on* things that teachers and administrators *do* and *think*. The so-called 'resistance' and 'radical pedagogy' theorists (see Giroux 1983) are in a sense just as abstract as the reproduction models they criticise because their work does not actually address the work situation of teachers (Neate 1983) such as pedagogical strategies and organisational procedures. In addition, while 'resistance' by students may well have emancipatory moments and progressive implications, it is the underlying logic of the setting in which resistance occurs that is of interest to me. In other words, teachers and administrators need to 'resist' by interrogating and collectively changing the conditions of existence for work *in* schools as a necessary starting point for countering inequalities in education. The central task is reorientating *process* and *practice* to definite but different ends, namely emancipatory interests that inform a concept of equality.

First, schools should be de-bureaucratised, and if alternative organisational forms are unknown, they should be developed. In any case, principals and other school administrators need to rework organisational procedures so that teachers, students and their parents are involved in decisions that affect their work situations and access to school knowledge. Lukes' (1976) principles may well provide a beginning point for judging the degree to which school procedures facilitate a diversity of capacities.

In particular, the testing and evaluation schedules of schools should be trashed in favour of 'teaching'. One wonders how a high school (or system) might operate where incessant testing and grading were foregone in favour of innovative and resourceful teaching aimed at a critical awareness and action in the world. This is not just a matter of 'balance' or 'emphasis' but one of philosophy. The teaching and administrative load directly connected with assessment is immense and its abolition would free-up resources for more useful tasks such as teaching. More importantly, to attack assessment, at all levels, is to contest the credentialling function of school, *as it is*, namely unfair. Minimally, to take this school policy suggestion seriously entails a full consideration of the *logic* of evaluation 'in *this* school' and the meanings and implications of terms such as 'bright', 'merit', 'talent', 'achievement' and so on, for '*these* kids'.

It is hardly the case that a school could abolish that which is transformed into the euphemism of 'reporting to parents' without repercussions from the community. The dialectic between the school, parents and students may well promote 'critical thinking' and galvanise 'collective political struggle' (Giroux 1983). More likely, the school community will break along class lines, with the major opposition to such a proposal emanating from 'middle-class' groups, who are locked into the competitive ethos of the market-place (see Neate 1983), because that is all there is. The contrastive rhetoric between school and community is likely under these conditions to be strongly contested. This is not the place to discuss such relationships. Given a commitment to equality, school staff have a responsibility to work towards that end. The importance of having a carefully formulated school policy and a will to implement it, is underlined by this responsibility.

Second, the notion of a *unitary* education at all levels should be actively pursued. Specialism might well be necessary at secondary and tertiary levels but only as one group of knowledge among others. The implications of this proposal are that *all* students should have access to the range of school curricula in such a way as to ensure the probability of appropriating knowledge rather than merely possessing it. The exclusionary and differentiating function of mathematics and science in particular must be overcome.

The concept of 'appropriation' means more than factual learning, being directed more at 'getting inside' a body of concepts and propositions and being able to use them *directly*, either in practice or by vicarious experience. This notion is central to the emancipatory thrust in so far as student control over learning is concerned.

The concern of Connell et al. (1982, pp. 200–1) about the respective places of the academic and an organic 'working- class' curriculum that provides access to formal knowledge via learning, which begins with their own experience and the circumstances which shape it, is one of the critical points on which my position in this paper balances. I am sympathetic with the aims of Connell and his associates. But it seems to me that the liberal rhetoric of teaching has always urged that which they are suggesting, yet it has happened only exceptionally. What is lacking are models that are accessible to teachers. There needs to be a massive input of people and material resources into Australian schools to make 'the two kinds of curriculum' a living possibility. This is undoubtedly a central government role as I have suggested. But, it has to be said, that role can hardly be expected from governments such as Queensland's.

The idea of a unitary education is also in tension with the historical break between private and government schools. Gorz's (1973) paradox is immediately apparent. If access to high-status positions is mediated by credentials and these are determined by high-status knowledge—the hegemonic curriculum—then government schools will need to provide the same access to such knowledge as the private schools despite the preselection advantages enjoyed by private schools. In this sense the hegemonic curriculum is 'really useful' in the contemporary context because it provides, in turn, access to knowledge and power. Similarly, if the unitary education concept implies a substantial critical grounding in aesthetics, philosophy and the social sciences for all, then many schools, including private, may need a curriculum review.

Third, and perhaps the central issue, is the issue of teaching or pedagogy. The policy suggestions of Connell and associates and those of Marginson (1983b) hinge on the means to achieve new aims for particular categories of students. This calls for a radical pedagogy, which apart from different individual and small-scale successes, has not yet been 'discovered' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979). The essential problem for many teachers, as my students keep telling me, is not the acceptance of the necessity for a re-orientation in schooling—they bear the brunt of the old each day with its tensions and frustrations—but how to do it within bureaucratic structures. The teaching profession lays claim to pedagogical expertise, within the meritocratic ideology, to knowledge and skills that differentiate it from other occupations. The techniques of learning and habits of thought that are associated with school learning are largely learned outside the school in civil society. The dominant rhetoric of teaching labels children as 'equal' *individuals* when it is known a priori that individuals vary according to social background. To treat children as 'equals' in the application of teaching techniques then presupposes that all are equally able to appropriate school learning (fallacious it seems) or that *the school* must develop the required habits of thought and learning techniques necessary for academic success. This is the Achilles' Heel of the teaching profession because it is demonstrable that schools frequently fail to 'teach' so that outcomes are *not* closely tied to the social origins of the child, even when children are judged to be 'bright'. The policy implication is that different pedagogical techniques (means) are required that account for differences in backgrounds, to render children as Bahro (1978, p. 290) puts it, capable and motivated to learn.

My intent here is to generate a reappraisal of the logic of 'teaching', about which there is a massive literature and a great collection of folklore, towards a radical pedagogy. For example, in teaching young children to read, the progression is typically from readiness activities ('which duck is facing the wrong way?') through to sound and symbol association and acquisition of a basic sight vocabulary. Successful students have a background which enables them to tolerate such activities and to make sense of it. In other words, it is assumed that students have a common background of book experience that provides a range of expectation about and understanding of print. Readiness programs of the type described are print impoverished *because* of these assumptions. In some working-class schools, such programs may endure for six months or so because the kids are 'slow'. In these schools children require print immersion in the world of books so that the essential habits of thought and learning techniques are established in the first place. This is not a matter of emphasis but a shift in *pedagogical logic*; nor is it a 'deficit' model because it is directed at liberation from an oppressed state. It is to this kind of issue, at all levels in the educational structure, that school policy and educational and curriculum research must be directed if the 'failure-at-day-1-week-1 syndrome' is to be addressed at all; and it is this level of specificity about which some radical pedagogy writing is silent and therefore impotent.

Whether it is palatable or not, an immediate obstacle is the teaching force itself. Because of their biographies, training and on-task socialisation, relatively few teachers seem able on their own, to transcend the present patterns of school, to see through the minutiae of their daily existence. Innovation remains at the level of *means* to achieve, better, the same goals. This is why a large scale in-service program from 'without' (i.e. the Commonwealth) seems appropriate.

A final pedagogical policy implication is suggested by this discussion and has to do with packaged materials. Such materials, like the readiness example, have built into them assumptions about student background and learning techniques. Their use is flawed in this respect. Moreover, teacher work shows clear signs of intensification in terms of organisational and other detail that has to be done as well (e.g. Review of School Based Assessment [ROSBA] activities in Queensland). There is an attraction in the use of ready-made materials even when the goals of a teacher may be ostensibly emancipatory. The issue here is that the reliance on ready-made materials together with the pressure of demands from elsewhere detracts from the teaching process itself, from 'personalised, competent teaching'. To this extent teaching is progressively deskilled. In my view, one of the key administrative tasks in today's schools is that of 'freeing up' teachers to get on with their object of interest, teaching, and that which bears on teaching, for instance community consultation. If schools are to be concerned with equality and a shift in pedagogy, this requirement must be met.

Concluding remarks

In this essay I have argued for schools to actively oppose the construction of *educational inequalities* at both the student entry point and within school practices. This strategy in my view would go some way towards resisting the meritocratic ideology which infuses and saturates the *logic* of schools.

This position in no way denies the intrusion into school practice, determinations from elsewhere or the general conditions of Australian capitalism. Nor is it (another) call for the quick solution to complex problems. What I hope I have done is set some parameters for a fruitful discussion of new horizons within a framework of optimism that something can be done.

The moment of truth of course for most 'radical' educators at this point is to specify what can be done. The discussion of terms such as 'equality' does not necessarily provide imperatives for action beyond the generalities of equal outcomes and so on. My preference is for equal 'outcomes' even though it is difficult to see the shape of this in schools as they are, except hazily. At least in the short term, this imperative includes equal access to the professions (i.e. the reformist position) and in this regard, the curriculum is established. How to teach it though is somewhat more perplexing. In the longer term, 'equal outcomes' requires much more work by the Australian government.

Finally, radical educators have to face up to the conservative and radical charge that 'central' planning is inimical to diversity. Grand social goals such as equality are not decreed or handed down, otherwise we would all be living freely in a land of plenty. I think that equality in education can only be identified as a worthwhile goal and pursued by central planning that ensures a concurrence of action and direction. There needs to be a lot of consultation to get this moving. The costs of failure in human terms are too great.

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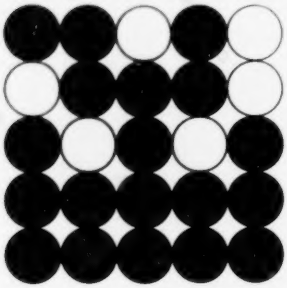

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Education and the structure of opportunity

Philip Robinson

Until now, we have looked at children, their socialization, classrooms and schools, as well as their teachers and the curriculum they experience, always within a tacit assumption that education is a good thing and that it will benefit all children in their future lives. We now turn to look more closely at the assumptions which support schools and, in almost every society, a policy of at least a period of universal education. Ultimately the basis of that policy is that education will help to bring more equality of opportunity and for some, that education will bring an egalitarian society. The two are not the same, the advocate of equality of opportunity may also support an increase in inequality within society and the egalitarian see the pursuit of greater opportunity as contradictory to his aims of a classless society.

The debate about equality is fundamentally a discussion about values and secondly about means. Whatever his perspective, the sociologist explores the mechanics of equality and though we may never be able to agree as to what equality is, we can at least reach some consensus as to how inequality is created, sustained and reproduced, whether or not it is necessary to the working of society and, more particularly, how schools affect the dynamics of equality.

Many things have been meant by equality; for Ellen Wilkinson, the first Minister of Education in the British post-war Labour administration, her operational concept was 'parity of esteem'. By this she meant that the three divisions in education - secondary grammar, secondary technical and secondary modern - were to be separate but equal. The intent was that the secondary selection examination taken when children were eleven years old (the 11 plus) would not just be a device for picking future grammar school pupils but an assessment of each child's abilities so that children could be placed in the educational setting best suited to their aptitudes and abilities. In theory the selection examination provided *equality of access*: each child had access to a secondary school place and the test used to allocate him was 'objective' and thus fair to all. The lack of fairness, however, soon became apparent as 'In some Welsh education authorities, two in five children at eleven would be sent to grammar school, some English authorities catered for fewer than one in five' (Bellaby, 1977, p. 10). The tests themselves were not a perfect predictor of eventual academic success, selecting some able children for secondary modern schools as well as some less able for grammar.

A consequence of the failure of equality of access was to shift the definition of equality. Instead of equality of access attention began to focus on *equality of outcome*; it was not enough to seek equality in the admission of children to the educational system, one had to work towards the achievement of equality at the end. It is important to clear up one common misunderstanding. Equality of outcome is not the same as identity of outcome; it does not mean that each child should leave the school with identical grades in identical subjects. Equality is not identicality, a monotonous mediocrity where the weak are supported and the strong repressed. The aim of social policies in promoting equality of outcome is that if the population were divided into groups along non-educational criteria then the achievement of those groups would be the same. In other words, if one took the achievement of children born north of Manchester this ought to be the same as that for children born south of Guildford; or if one took children with blue eyes they should match the achievement of those with brown.

If children are divided into groups on the basis of their father's occupation, all children of bus-drivers together and all the children of lawyers, for example, one might expect that the achievements of each group would be the same. Clearly *within* each group there would be a range of different achievements - just as some individual children are better at ball-skills than others so some are better at solving mathematical problems than others. However, examining the educational achievements of children so grouped we would discover one of the most persistent facts within the sociology of education, that is, if we compare groups on the basis of father's occupation the differences in educational achievement are great and persistent. Halsey (1975) has shown that children born during the period 1910 to 1919 to fathers in professional and high managerial jobs (doctors, bank managers, judges, etc.) had five times the average chance of going to university while children of unskilled workers had less than a quarter the average chance. For children born between 1930 and 1949 the chances were three times the average for the children of professional workers and less than half of the average chance for children whose fathers were employed in an unskilled occupation, evidence which supports the conclusion reached by Little (1971) that, 'Two decades of explicit social and educational policy, not only in this country but in many industrial societies, have indicated how difficult it is to narrow social inequalities through educational policy and practice.' The social inequalities identified are apparently related to social class and before we look at the links between class and education we need to clarify the term, 'social class'.

Social class

As we have already stressed, each concept within the social sciences is dependent for its meaning upon the theoretical framework within which it is used. For Durkheim, class was not a concept which was central to his explanatory framework. He argued that as the division of labour progressed, as the initial stages of organic solidarity became more developed, then society would reach a stage where 'social inequalities exactly expresses natural inequalities' (1938, p. 377). For Durkheim it was not the inequalities as such but the regulation of those inequalities which was at issue.

Weber makes an important distinction between class and status, both aspects of the distribution of power within society. By class, Weber means one's relationship to the economy and labour market, and by status, 'every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honour*' (quoted in Gerth and Mills, 1946, p. 187). Unlike Marx, Weber's classes are not communities, 'they merely represent possible and frequent bases for communal action'. Thus Weber makes a distinction between social classes sharing the same *life-chances*, and status groups which are communities of people sharing the same *life-style*.

In Marx's analysis of society, class is a central concept. At the start of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels write, 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.' In essence there are two great classes, the bourgeois and the proletarians, the former owning the means of production and the latter nothing but their own labour. Though these form the two great classes of society Marx does speak of the 'lumpenproletariat', or those right at the bottom of a hierarchical society, and also at times distinguishes between the capitalist and the landowners in discussing the bourgeois. Unlike Durkheim, Marx argued that it was the class struggle which carried a society forward, though not in a deterministic way (quoted in Bottomore and Rubel, 1963, p. 196):

> The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations

> with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. . . . In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not form a class.

It is only when members of a class have a consciousness of their common class position that they form a social class; history is always made by men and women and it is in coming to recognize their objective class position that people unite to bring about change.

Both Marx and Weber used social class as a unit of analysis; their concepts formed part of their theories of society. Social class is also used in a descriptive sense and in many research projects it forms the critical independent variable - people are compared on the basis of their social class. The usual method of allocating a person to a social class is on the basis of his, or his father's, occupation. Occupations which are judged to be of similar standing are grouped together to form six social classes ranging from social class one (professional and managerial) to social class five (unskilled workers). In this classification the largest social class, three, is divided into two, non-manual and manual, the former being clerks and secretaries and the latter skilled workers such as toolmakers, plumbers and electricians.

More recently there has been a move to increase the sensitivity of class as a research tool by dividing the population into socio-economic groups. The Registrar General uses seventeen such groups for the analysis of census data. The Hope-Goldthorpe scale which codes occupations on the general desirability of occupations as popularly assessed has 124 categories though these may be collapsed to a 36 category version of the scale (Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974). Both scales implicitly take a Weberian approach to stratification in recognizing the importance of status as well as the more economic concept of class.

At best social class is a crude research instrument in whatever form it is operationalized. There may be a greater variation within a category than between categories, thus the range of behaviour of bus drivers and their families may be far greater than the difference between bus drivers and for example, school teachers. In the discussion that follows it must be remembered that class is a way of grouping people together which is somewhat arbitrary, thus for every statement made about any class there will be individual members for whom the statement is completely inappropriate. Like all concepts in social science, class must be treated with caution.

Social class and equality

In placing together concepts like class and equality the question must be raised as to whether the two are linked. In an influential paper written in 1945, Davis and Moore argue that 'Social inequality is . . . an unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons.' Social class is necessary to all societies as it reflects the relative importance of different positions in society to its survival, the relative rank of different positions being determined by the functional importance of the position together with the scarcity of personnel able to occupy that position. Thus refuse collectors may have a high functional importance to society but they occupy a low position because there is no shortage of possible recruits. A design engineer is both important and scarce and thus society rewards him sufficiently for the individual to be attracted to the position and once there to continue to perform the duties attached.

The functionalist position adopted by Davis and Moore has not gone uncriticized. In a debate with Davis and Moore, Tumin (1953) argues that although each society must distribute power unequally it does not follow that differences in prestige and esteem should be a necessary consequence. Tumin attacks the logic of Davis and Moore. A more telling criticism is that the latter's position does not accord with historical fact. It assumes a rationality in organizing our affairs which does not accord with reality, for example, Davis and Moore stress the functional importance of religion as a legitimating force for the central value system and hence deduce that the religious official will enjoy high rewards. In England the Archbishop of Canterbury earns about the same as the head of a large comprehensive school and most of the clergy less than a basic scale schoolteacher. Their status is by no means guaranteed and even the esteem given to the Primate of all England may be quickly lost if he is seen to become too involved in matters not of his immediate responsibility. Within Davis and Moore's discussion there is no concept of struggle either between classes or between status groups.

The perspective which Davis and Moore develop is important for its links with a more influential position, that of *human capital theory*. Vestiges of this theory can be traced back in economics as far as Adam Smith in the eighteenth century. Its contemporary formulation is associated with the work of Theodore Schultz (1961) and Mark Blaug (1970). The latter opens his text on the economics of education by stating that, 'In all economies of which we have knowledge, people with more education earn on average higher incomes than people with less education.' In essence the theory states that both individuals and nations will find it profitable to invest in education as such investment will increase skills and hence productivity, which in turn will generate wealth. The assumption behind both functionalist and human capital theory is that there is a free market for labour. That is each society has a set of high-skill jobs which carry high remuneration, the supply of labour for these jobs is regulated through the education system so that those which most ability get the most demanding jobs. To reiterate Durkheim, the classes which result will be based upon natural inequalities, we will achieve what Young (1958) satirized as *The Rise of the Meritocracy*.

The influence of these views for policy in education has been immense. Third World countries were urged, and indeed given financial help, to invest in education. Only then could their economies be expected to take off into self-sustained growth, free of the bottlenecks caused by a lack of skilled manpower. For domestic policy investment in education would enhance social justice; poverty could be eliminated so long as the poor had access to schools. In the words of the Plowden Committee, 'The first step must be to raise the schools with low standards to the national average; the second, quite deliberately to make them better.' Again, however, the evidence of the past two decades suggests that the theory remains unproven. Thurow (1972) showed that education among adult white males had become more equal in the USA between 1950 and 1970. Measured as the percentage share of years of educational attainment, the lowest fifth had increased their hold on education and the highest fifth had reduced theirs. But at the same time, contrary to the predictions of human capital theory, the distribution of income had become less equal. Thurow concludes that investment in education is not sufficient to promote a more egalitarian society. The difficulty in interpreting Thurow's conclusion lies in knowing what in fact is being measured. There has been greater equality in the years of schooling which is not the same as saying there has been any equality in measured learning outcomes. All children could have the same schooling, and yet a fixed percentage of children attain educational qualifications which they can use on the market. Before turning to look more specifically at the contribution that education makes to the development of a more egalitarian society we need to extend our discussion of class to include an allied concept, that of social mobility.

Social mobility

Our specific interest in this chapter is the relation between education and the occupational structure. Education can be seen, amongst other things, as a preparation for the occupational structure and we may ask to what extent education promotes the individual's chances of increasing his occupational status as against, for example, that of his father. In comparing the occupational status of fathers and sons we are looking at *inter-generational* mobility and asking to what extent sons follow the occupation of their fathers. Mobility can also be examined in terms of *intra-generational* movement, or the extent to which the same individual experiences a change in status during his own lifetime. In both cases we are interested in the amount of openness in the society. At the extremes, a completely open society would be one where the relationship between the occupations of fathers and the occupations of sons, for example, was completely random. This would be a society where status was earned by *achievement*, where knowing the father's occupation would not help one to predict the occupation of his children. A completely closed society would be one where status was *ascribed* at birth, the street-cleaner produced street-cleaners, nurses produced nurses and judges produced judges. In each society, however, there is a mixture of both achievement and ascription, the inter-relationships of endeavour and birth are complex and changing.

Within a decade of the 1944 Education Act in England, Glass and his colleagues were examining some of the possible consequences of the Act for social mobility. The purpose of this study was to note the extent of movement in social status, or social position, by individuals of diverse social origins. Using a model of society divided into layers - hierarchies rather like an elaborate multi-tiered sandwich - the task was to assess the movement between the layers both upwards and downwards. Glass found, for example, that 46 per cent of those sons born between 1900 and 1909 whose fathers had been in the upper occupational categories were, by 1949, downwardly mobile and 53 per cent of those whose fathers had been semi-skilled or unskilled manual workers were upwardly mobile. Education appeared to have two effects. In the first place the type of secondary schooling influenced the association between the status of fathers and sons. The grammar school stood out as preserving the links between upper-status fathers and sons and in increasing the distance moved by sons of low occupational status fathers. In other words the age of eleven was crucial to mobility chances; selection to a grammar school was a powerful determinant of eventual status and income. The second effect noted by Glass was that further education (by which was meant any full-time education after the statutory school-leaving age) acted as a reinforcing rather than a second-chance agency underlining the critical position of the secondary school selection examination. Further education was not the avenue to mobility for the failed 11-plus student but tended to attract those who had been selected for grammar school and who had decided not to follow the conventional path into higher education.

One of the specialized studies associated with the central study of mobility was that conducted by Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956), into the relative chance of selection into grammar schools in two regions of England. The study of an affluent area of south-east England and a northern industrial city compared the numbers entering grammar schools in each area. As might be expected, for each there were more middle-class, non-manual pupils attending grammar school than represented in the area and fewer working-class children. In the industrial city, Middlesborough, for example, 77 per cent of the population was classified as working-class although only 55 per cent of grammar school pupils in the town were working-class. Floud, Halsey and Martin agree, 'the present differences in proportion of the contribution of the various occupational classes to the grammar school intake can be explained almost entirely in terms of the unequal distribution of measured intelligence' (1956, p. 58). That is the selection examination at eleven was efficient in picking out high-ability children for grammar school places. But, as we saw in Chapter 4, intelligence is not an objective and absolute quality. As Floud, Halsey and Martin comment, 'measured intelligence is well known to be largely an acquired characteristic' (p. 65). The test results allowed the identification of those children whose cultural background was contiguous to that of schools rejecting others, potentially just as capable, whose background does not immediately relate to the school.

Government studies and a note of scepticism

During the 1950s the pattern of mobility within English society was becoming clearer to see. Upward mobility depended largely on selection for grammar schools at eleven. The inefficiency of the education system in identifying, and having identified holding on to, the most able children, especially from working-class homes, was demonstrated both by the Crowther Report on the education of fifteen- to eighteen-year-olds, and the Robbins Report on higher education. Using as a sample men who were undertaking their national service in the late 1950s, the Crowther Committee were able to demonstrate the wastage within the system, illustrated in Table 9.1. Taking those men who were in the top ability group, 11 per cent of the total sample, 42 per cent had left

TABLE 9.1

Left school at age	15 years (%)	16 years (%)	17 years (%)	18 years (%)
All men in top 11 per cent of ability	9	33	17	41
Men in top 11 per cent of ability whose father's were manual workers	19	44	13	24

Adapted from Crowther Report, 1959, vol. 1, page 9, Table 4.

school by the age of sixteen. If we look at those men in the top 11 per cent whose fathers were manual workers we see that 63 per cent had left full time education by the age of sixteen. It was on the basis of evidence such as this that the Robbins Committee in 1963 argued for the expansion of higher education to soak up the pool of ability which was not being utilized by the existing system. The evidence seemed unequivocal, the selection examination used at age eleven was not differentiating among children as precisely as was expected and in consequence there were large numbers of able children who were not completing their education. The implications of such findings were clear, selection ought to be delayed for as long as possible and opportunities for education must be expanded.

In 1961 Anderson wrote a closely argued paper which expressed some doubt on the easy relationship between education and mobility. Using the data of Hall and Glass, together with evidence from Sweden and the USA, he concluded, 'education is but one of many factors influencing mobility, and it may be far from a dominant factor'. In other words there were people with high formal qualifications who did not gain high-status employment, just as there were those with few formal requirements who nevertheless were successful. Anderson's article was a forerunner of the work of the next two decades which explored what Bourdieu terms 'the relative autonomy' of education, of particular importance being the Oxford study into occupational mobility of men aged 20 to 64 and resident in England and Wales in 1972.

After analysing data on 10,309 men in the Oxford study, Goldthorpe and Llewellyn (1977 a and b) show that the analogy with a multi-tiered sandwich, a hierarchical pattern of stratification, is too simplistic. The top layer has been expanding throughout this century, thus recruiting new members, new in that their fathers were in occupations below this level, and the bottom layer has shown a tendency to diminish and to recruit from itself. Thus the layers of the cake are changing in size. To be more specific, Goldthorpe and Llewellyn used a seven-fold class model from the 36-category version of the Hope-Goldthorpe occupational scale, and for much of their analysis group this into three: a *Service* class of professionals, administrators and managers, an *Intermediate* class of clerical, self-employed artisans and supervisors and a *Working* class of manual workers. Table 9.2 is adapted from 1977a, p. 262.

TABLE 9.2 *Class composition by class of father when the respondent's age was 14*

Father's class	Respondent's class in 1972 Service	 Intermediate	 Working
		percentage by column	
Service	32	13	5
Intermediate	34	38	24
Working	34	49	71
	n = 2,280	n = 2,540	n = 3,755

This table shows that the Service class is more heterogeneous in its recruitment than the Working class. Reading down the columns, 32 per cent of Service class occupants originate from this class, 34 per cent from the Intermediate class and 34 per cent from the Working class. The Working class is much more homogeneous, 71 per cent of its members coming from working-class homes. Bechhofer, Elliott and McCrone (1978) support these findings, arguing that 'the middle class in Britain today is a *less established, less unified* middle class' (their stress), and is thus less likely to become a focal point for political action. Conversely the working class may be becoming more a class for itself, in the Marxist sense, but it is also becoming a smaller class, representing 73 per cent of the male workforce in 1911 and 58 per cent in 1971. The social structure of modern England and Wales is becoming more complex, and with technological advance is likely to become more so. The diminution of the working class is not in the face of an enlarging middle class but of a diversifying class structure. An important question is the contribution that education plays in this process. Was Anderson's note of scepticism as to the role of education justified?

School and life chances – England and Wales

It is widely held that as society becomes more bureaucratic the bond between education and occupational placement will get tighter. The critical period in the life of an individual is his years of formal schooling because the qualifications he gains then will have a strongly determinant influence on his life-chances. An aspect of this thesis has been labelled by Goldthorpe and Llewellyn (1977a) as a 'counter balance' thesis of mobility. The thesis has it (1977a, p. 274)

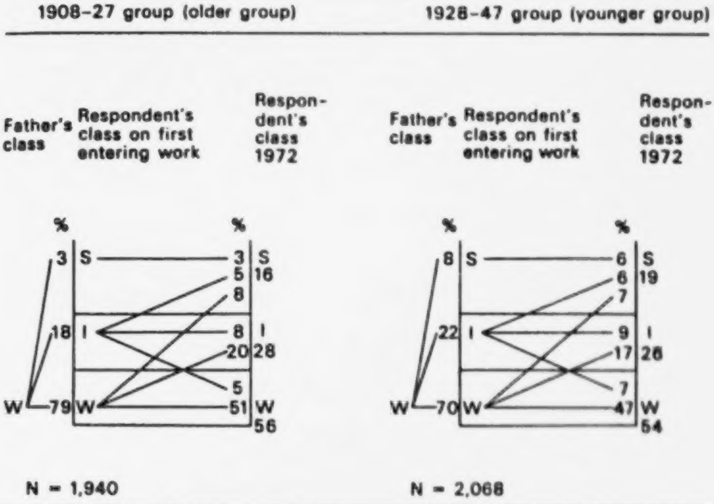
> that any increase in upward mobility achieved in recent decades via educational channels will have been offset by the decrease in chances of advancement in the course of working life. The self-sustaining properties of the class structure – as one of power and advantage – will be little altered by reforms which do not touch basic inequalities of *condition*.

The evidence they present from the Oxford study compares respondents born between 1908 and 1927 (the older group) with those born between 1928 and 1947 (the younger group) at three points in the life-cycle – the first point the social class of the respondent's father when the respondent was fourteen years old, the second the social class of the occupation the respondent first entered and the third the respondent's class position in 1972. Table 9.3 presents their results for men originating from the working class.

Looking at the amount of mobility at first entry to work, the younger group show increased mobility compared to the older group, 30 per cent upwardly mobile as against 21 per cent. But if we look at the percentage who are upwardly mobile *after* having started work, we see that the number is about the same for each group – roughly a third are upwardly mobile after starting work. The nature of social structure and the contribution of education is much more complex than many theorists acknowledge, a simple correspondence between the structure of capitalism and the occupational structure distorts the evidence which the Oxford study has presented. Goldthorpe and Llewellyn in pointing to the complexity note that much more research needs to be done into the process of reproduction, possibly starting with more biographical studies to begin to unravel the nature of social mobility.

One way of trying to assess the importance of education relative to other variables like family background in determining occupational success is to construct a path diagram. Path analysis is a technique for assessing how much of the difference in, for example, income can be attributed to antecedent variables like occupation, education and so on. The most striking features of all path diagrams are their high residual factors, or the amount of difference which cannot be explained

TABLE 9.3.


1908–27 group (older group)
1928–47 group (younger group)
Father's class
Respondent's class on first entering work
Respondent's class 1972
%
%
3 S
18 I
W 79 W
3
5
8
8
20
5
51
S 16
I 28
W 56
N = 1,940
Father's class
Respondent's class on first entering work
Respondent's class 1972
%
%
8 S
22 I
W 70 W
6
6
7
9
17
7
47
S 19
I 26
W 54
N = 2,068

Adapted from Goldthorpe and Llewellyn, 1977a, p.276.

by the variables in the model. Using the Oxford data to account for the variance in individual occupational status in 1972, Halsey (1977) is able to explain 36 per cent of the variance by variables like father's education and his occupation, son's education and his first job. In other words, most of the variance, 64 per cent, is attributable to factors outside the model. Using data from the 1972 General Household Survey in the United Kingdom Psacharopoulos (1977) accounts for 31 per cent of the variance in earnings from variables of schooling, ability, occupation and family background. the high residual reflects the complexity of social life; were an individual to list the determinants of her specific income one would see the problems confronting any attempt to estimate the effects of a single variable, like education. However given these difficulties and the limitations of their method, both Halsey and Psacharopoulos see education playing an important part in the determinants of occupational status and of income. Halsey sees what has been happening over the past generations to be 'the weighting of the dice of social opportunity according to class, and "the game" is increasingly played through strategies of child rearing refereed by schools through their certifying arrangements' (1977, p. 184), a conclusion which supports Anderson's thesis that the effects of education are filtered through both status and class before directly influencing mobility.

School and life-chances – the USA

As part of 'the war on poverty' launched by President Johnson's administration, the US Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which directed the Commissioner of Education 'to survey inequalities in educational opportunities for major racial, ethnic and religious groups in the United States'. The expectation was that the different school achievement between whites and negroes was a reflection of different levels of educational provision. The policy implication was clear: equalize the resources going to the two groups and the educational outcomes would be similarly equated. The report of the survey, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, otherwise known as the Coleman Report, was published in July 1966.

Having collected information from 4,000 schools and 600,000 children, their teachers and school principals, throughout the USA, Coleman reached the conclusion (1966, p. 325) that

> Schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context; this very lack of independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their homes, neighbourhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school.

In sum, the expected difference *between* schools in terms of buildings, library facilities, teachers' qualifications and so on was not found. For each of the six racial groups examined (negroes, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, Mexican Indians, Oriental Americans and whites) most of the differences in achievement were between groups within the same school.

Summarising the report in 1969, Coleman wrote

> The major result is that the closest portions of the child's social environment – his family and fellow students – affect his achievement most, the more distant portion of his social environment – his teachers – affect it next most, and the non-social aspects of his school environment affect it very little.

Thus although equality of access existed in the USA equality of outcomes remained very large. Predictably the Coleman Report was the subject of a very heated debate, its methodology was criticized, its data re-analysed, but the major conclusion stayed. Interestingly the Plowden Report on English primary education, published six months after Coleman, had similar results. The Plowden enquiry found that differences between schools explained little of the variance in the abilities of English children, leading the Plowden Committee to conclude that the parental attitude of the home had a greater influence.

A more optimistic assessment of the affects of education was provided by Blau and Duncan (1967). Using data collected with the monthly Current Population Survey of the US Bureau of Census they examined the relative determinants of male occupational status in the USA. They concluded that, 'Education assumes increasing significance for social status in general and for the transmission of social standing from fathers to sons in particular' (1967, p. 430). They see a trend within American society where status is conferred on the basis of achieved rather than ascribed criteria. The trend implies 'that superior status cannot any more be directly inherited but must be legitimated by actual achievements that are socially acknowledged'. Their work has been criticized by Crowder (1974) for its uncritical acceptance of the Davis and Moore model of stratification and for depending on a path model with a residual of 83 per cent, that is, the Blau and Duncan model accounts for 17 per cent of the variation in income. Crowder suggests that one of the reasons for this is that 'the total amount of income rewards from occupational pursuits is to a large extent beyond the ascriptive or achievement characteristics of any particular person or group of persons in the occupational system'. Thus a vital determinant of income left out by Blau and Duncan is the control of the occupational structure within any society.

One of the most publicized studies into the relationship between education and the opportunity structure is that of Jencks and colleagues (1973). This work indicates an awareness of a political dimension to mobility having been initiated in the belief that the liberal social reforms of the 1960s in the USA had been misdirected. The reason, according to Jencks, was the enthusiastic adoption of human capital theory which carried the prescription that the abolition of poverty was possible through investment in the skills of the poor. The political position of Jencks and colleagues is that if inequality is to be reduced, then it must be attacked at source, namely the economic system, and not through proxy variables like education.

The data base for this study was that collected by Coleman and by Blau and Duncan, as well as over a dozen other studies relating to family background, educational outcomes and 'success' as measured by income. The conclusions reached by Jencks have provoked considerable discussion. For Clark (1973) 'Jencks has closed the circle. The last possibility of hope for the under-educated and oppressed minorities has been dashed.' For Thurow (1973), 'Inequality' might be summarized as 'nothing affects anything'; for Pullman (1974), the book is 'a bench mark in the study of how I.Q., education, occupational status, and income are interrelated'. Let us turn, then, to look at the conclusions that Jencks and his colleagues came to having completed their data reanalysis.

First, as a consequence of policies of compulsory schooling between the ages 6-16 years, the amount of time that people spend in school is becoming more equal. Jencks states, without comment, that 'at this level almost all inequalities are qualitative', thus it is important to note that his study does *not* include variables like teacher effectiveness, school climate, or curriculum. Beyond the statutory school year, in both pre-school and post-school education, middle-class white children make far greater use of the facilities available than other groups. Turning to quality, the data used is the amount of money spent on schools. Jencks acknowledges that there is little or no evidence to support a direct link between resources inputs and educational outputs but suggests there may be an indirect link in 'that both teachers and students *feel* there is a connection'. He estimates that in America the average white child receives something like 15-20 per cent more resources per year than the average black child, an estimate slightly larger than that made by Coleman in 1965 for an 8-10 per cent difference in favour of white children.

Turning to the distribution of cognitive skills measured by standardized tests, Jencks shows that both genetic and environmental inequality were important in determining cognitive inequality. He concludes that about 45 per cent of the variation in intelligence across a population is attributable to heredity, though this estimate could easily be off by as much as 20 per cent either way. Environment accounts for about 35 per cent of the variance, again with a similar margin of possible error, and the tendency of environmentally advantaged families to have genetically advantaged children accounts for the remaining 20 per cent.

Although occupational status of adult males is related more closely to educational attainment than to anything else which Jencks has measured, he shows that there are still large status differences among people with the same amount of education. This remains true when he compares people who have not only the same years of schooling, but the same family background and the same scores on tests of ability. At most, these characteristics explain about half of the difference, or the variance, in occupational status between individuals.

Finally, when analysing the determinants of income variation, Jencks concludes 'that there is nearly as much income variation among men who come from similar families, have similar credentials, and have similar test scores, as among men in general' (1972, p. 254). Jencks constructs a path model of the type subsequently used by both Halsey and Psacharopoulos, and which explains 22 per cent of the variance in income, in other words the residual, or unexplained variance, is 78 per cent. In comparing Jencks's results with thirty-six other attempts to explain variation in income in the USA, Psacharopoulos (1974) notes that only five studies explain a lower amount of variance than Jencks, that is less than 22% and the majority explain about 40% of the variance. Psacharopoulos concludes 'Jencks owes it to us to explain to what the differences are due'. Jencks attributes the large residual to 'luck', an unfortunate word as he admits, but which encapsulates, 'chance acquaintances who steer you to one line of work rather than another, the range of jobs that happen to be available in a particular community when you are job hunting, the amount of overtime work in your particular plant, whether bad weather destroys your strawberry crop, whether the new superhighway has an exit near your restaurant, and a hundred other unpredictable accidents' (1972, p. 227).

In short, Jencks concludes that equalizing educational opportunity would do very little to make adults more equal because, (a) children seem to be far more influenced by what happens at home than what happens at school; (b) the way teachers and students actually treat each other minute by minute seems to be the most important aspect of school and is largely out of control of educational planners; and (c) any changes which are exerted by the school are likely to diminish as the individual grows older. It may seem that the implication from Jencks's work is that we should cut expenditure on education. Jencks's counsel is against reducing the money being spent on schools on the grounds that schools are an important contributor to the quality of life as it is experienced in the present. By improving the quality of education now we are improving the quality of life of a significant proportion of the population, the children.

Jencks's own estimate of his work is both humble and realistic. He writes (1973):

> The evidence presented in *Inequality* seems to me to show that variations in family background, I.Q., genotype, exposure to schooling, and the quality of schooling cannot account for most of the variation in individual or family incomes. This means we must reject the conservative notion that income inequality is largely due to the fact that men are born with unequal abilities and raised in unequal home environments. We must also reject the liberal notion that equalizing educational opportunity will equalize people's incomes. The evidence in *Inequality* cannot carry us much further, even though its rhetoric sometimes tries.

The major lack of the study is a neglect of the actual process of education within the schools, a neglect of what is often referred to as the inside of the black box of education. Jencks is not unaware of this, noting, 'A high school's impact on individual students seems to depend on relatively subtle "climatic" conditions, not on the size of the budget or the presence of the resources professional educators claim are important.' There is some support here for the work of Phillipson (1971), Reynolds (1976), and Rutter *et al.* (1979), as discussed in Chapter 8. Over large samples, education may appear to have little impact on individuals' life-chances, but this is not to say that for any one individual education is not the major determinant of occupational success. Jencks does not deny this, but the importance of the intra-school factors remain to be fully developed. Jencks reinforces the points made by both Plowden and Coleman that a naive belief in the efficacy of education to bring about social equality is misplaced. However this does not imply that schools make no difference. One needs to clarify the level of the debate as well as the limitations to social policy.

The evidence from both Britain and America is that education, while a necessary factor in the promotion of mobility, is not a sufficient factor. Lipset (1972) argues that even a change from capitalism to communism would have no effect on mobility, as the critical feature is industrial society as such, not its ideological underpinning. Boudon agrees, along with Thurow (1972) that 'the social structure (i.e. the distribution of social status), is largely independent of the evolution of the educational structure' (1977, p. 187), and that 'cultural inequality probably plays a much more restricted role with respect to I.E.O. [inequality of educational opportunity] than many people believe' (1974, p. 110). In essence Boudon holds a model of social mobility which starts with the assumption that the distribution of individuals according to educational attainment varies as a function of social class background and that within each social class there are different probabilities for the decisions that are made. In other words, the upper social class are more likely to aim for elite jobs and make decisions contingent upon this while the lower class, still wishing to maximize their life chances, will nevertheless anticipate lower-level jobs. From his model, Boudon calculates the changing pattern of mobility over time, validating his results against mobility data which is available, such as Glass's work and data from OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) studies, to conclude that there is no doubt 'in industrial societies, and in particular in liberal industrial societies, *educational inequality* shows a constant tendency to decrease' (1977, emphasis in original) while social inequality remains. Boudon agrees with Thurow, 'that our reliance on education as the ultimate public policy for curing all problems, economic and social, is unwarranted at best and in all probability ineffective.' The scepticism of Anderson in 1961 has been supported by empirical studies in both Europe and the USA.

The mode of social mobility

So far we have looked at the extent of mobility and shown, that in England and Wales at least, there is greater mobility than frequently supposed. We have also seen, in the words of Bowman (1975), 'how schooling affects the lives of individuals and how it contributes to the restructuring of society depends as much on policies for labour markets as on policies intended to redistribute schooling.' In accounting for mobility we have shown the influence of changes in the occupational structure, but as well as this dimension there is also an ideological dimension to mobility. There is within society a set of values, often conflicting, which relate to what is considered to be an appropriate mode of mobility within society. In one mode, entry to the elite status may be seen as the privilege of the few; only those with special attributes enter the governing class. In another mode, entry to the elite may be seen as a prize awarded to those who do best in open competition. Turner (1961) in making this distinction called the first type of mobility *sponsorship*, comparable to the sponsorship necessary to join an elite club, and the second *contest* mobility, or a race in which each competitor has the same chance as any other. The first which represents a pure ascriptive society could, Turner argued, be found in England in the late 1950s while the second, a pure achievement society, was closer to American social structure. In using the word 'mode', Turner is drawing on Durkheim's idea of 'collective conscience' or, 'the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life . . . it has specific characteristics which make it a distinct reality' (1933, p. 79).

Each mode of mobility has consequences for the nature of social control within society as it has for the values of education, the timing of selection and the curriculum of schools. Turner argues, 'The most conspicuous control problem is that of ensuring loyalty in the disadvantaged classes toward a system where they receive less than a proportional share of society's goods' (1961, p. 125). Under the contest mode this is managed through the creation of a universal norm of ambition through which each person is led to believe that if only he had the drive, the dedication, then the top positions would be open to him. The elite is composed of individuals who are the same as those in the mass of the population but who have worked hard to earn their prize of elite status. On the contrary the sponsorship mode holds the belief in the natural superiority of the elite, a group possessing esoteric skills which mark their difference from common man.

As the nature of social control differs, so does the form of selection which operates in each system. The prime task of the education system within sponsorship is to separate out the potential elite as soon as possible so that the novitiates may receive an education which marks their enhanced status. Contest mobility has as its major preoccupation the avoidance of any sharp separation into inferior and superior students. All are encouraged to stay within the system though this eventually creates a problem of 'inconsistency between encouragement to achieve and the realities of limited opportunity' (Clark, 1961), or as Hopper (1971) sees it, the crucial dilemma of all contest systems of 'warming-up' and 'cooling-down' at the same time, encouraging all to succeed yet limiting the areas where success can be experienced.

Finally, the content of education will differ within each mode. Education under sponsorship is for elite values; for taste, discrimination, style and distinctiveness. Eliot (1948) defined the condition for this, writing, 'For it is an essential condition of the preservation of the quality of the culture of the minority, that it continues to be a minority culture.' Knowledge transmitted in schools will tend, therefore, to be theoretical, to be 'pure' and divorced from the mundane problems of everyday life. In contrast, education under the contest mode is a preparation for open partnership in society; knowledge transmitted will tend to be practical, that which is considered of use to both the individual and society. The differing curricula reflect different values held for education. The prized value in contest mobility is 'getting ahead', thus credentials matter as a symbol of one's position within the race; they reflect a status open to all who have the will to try. The distinguishing marks of sponsorship are not available in the market place; style is not a common attribute but the product of the elite culture as embodied in the Public Schools of England or the Gymnasia of Western Germany.

Turner's article is seminal in that it has had a widespread influence on various aspects of the way in which the education-mobility interrelationship has been conceptualized. It has led to empirical work into the nature of different kinds of mobility, Lipset (1963) and Kerckhoff (1974), and into the links between mobility and personality, Turner (1964) and Elder (1965). Turner's discussion of the relationship between the form of mobility and the form of the content and evaluation of educational practice relates to aspects of the work of both Bernstein and Bourdieu, the attempt to locate the process of education and the form of its transmission to the social structure of the age. The most direct link, however, is with the work of Hopper (1968, 1971) and Collins (1977), both of whom use Turner's discussion in their respective analyses as to why a particular form of educational system has evolved within a specific society.

Hopper (1968) attempts to broaden Turner's two-fold system into a typology which could be used for the classification of educational systems as a base from which one could begin to explain why each has taken the form it has. For Hopper the primary function of all educational systems is one of selection; by asking how, when, who and why the selection process takes place it should be possible to construct the base from which comparisons may be made. In other words if we were going to compare the system of education in France with that in Germany, or Thailand with that in Malaysia, then the management of selection would be the dimension we would use. In the end, Hopper only manages to supplant Turner's two categories with two of his own, the first is *ideology of implementation* and the second *ideology of legitimization*.

Under ideologies of implementation Hopper groups the 'how' and the 'when' questions. The 'how' question being of the order, Is selection centrally controlled and administered, as in, for example, Malaysia, or is it the responsibility of individual education authorities as in England? The 'when' question is, Is selection early, as in Germany, or late in the educational career of the individual as in the USA? In discussing ideologies of legitimization Hopper groups together the 'who' and the 'why' questions and builds onto two of Parsons's pattern variables (see Chapter 1), universalistic/particularistic and individualistic/collectivist to produce a fourfold typology for the justification of selection. Thus a country falling into the first cell, Communist, would be expected to justify selection in terms of collectivist criteria, 'society needs the skills of its people', and universalistic criteria, 'we shall select those who achieve the necessary grades in the common examination' (see Table 9.4).

TABLE 9.4

Why should they be selected?	Who should be selected?	
	Universalistic	Particularistic
Collectivist	Communistic	Paternalistic
Individualistic	Meritocratic	Aristocratic

Adapted from Hopper, 1968.

In struggling to build a typology, Hopper tends to pass over the complexity within any educational system. In each society there are different modes of mobility which co-exist, the educational system responds partially and unevenly to a number of different, and often competing, values. The search to develop a model for the whole educational system can lead one to ignore its diversity. Collins (1977), working within a Weberian perspective, tries to respond to this diversity.

He argues that any educational system is the product of economic (class) interests, but at the same time is also the product of cultural (status) and bureaucratic (party) interests. Thus in creating a theory of social reproduction where the extent of mobility is juxtaposed alongside the mode of mobility the three factors of class, status and party must be seen as interdependent dimensions of the process. The organizational form of education within any society cannot be explained as just reproducing the factors of production needed to sustain capitalism. Historically, most training for practical skills has taken place within factories through apprenticeships and on-the-job training and not through the formal educational system. Further, Collins argues, the establishment of compulsory education does not always follow industrialization and he gives Prussia and Japan as two nineteenth-century examples of countries where compulsory education has been established before industrialization.

Building on his Weberian model, Collins sees education as a *cultural market* in which social factors simultaneously attempt to attain certain goals. Within the market, different groups may be following similar purchasing patterns but for different reasons. Central government, for example, may see education as a means of underwriting its control over particular classes while at the same time members of that class see education as a means of increasing their status. The way in which the market adjusts to its different demands is through the currency of credentials, formal qualifications. The tendency within every society is towards a credential inflation, the demand for higher and higher formal certificates as licences to enter particular occupational groups. Looking at trends in America in 1964, Folger and Nam report that about 85 per cent of the rise in educational attainment may be attributed to increased educational levels within occupations, and only 15 per cent to shifts in the occupational structure from occupations requiring less to occupations requiring more education. Education is part of what Hirsch (1977) calls the 'positional economy' in that the supply of high-status jobs is much less fluid than the supply of manpower able to perform those jobs. In such market conditions the price goes up, in this case measured not in dollars or pounds but in paper qualifications. As Folger and Nam conclude, 'Increasingly the future supply of educated persons may make the gross level of educational attainment a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for occupational entry.'

The workings of the 'cultural market' are little understood. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) see something similar to a cultural market legitimating the existing social order, 'Blessed, then, are "modest" folk who, when all is said and done, aspire in their modesty to nothing but what they have; and praise be to "the social order" which refuses to hurt them by calling them to over-ambitious destinies, as little suited to their abilities as to their aspirations.' But we have seen from the Oxford study that the pattern of mobility in England at least is not as rigid as Bourdieu and Passeron would imply for France. 'Modest folk' are to an extent upwardly mobile as a consequence of expanding Service and Intermediate sectors. The strength of Collins's model lies in its fit to empirical data, introducing a flexibility which responds to the increasing diversity of the social structure. He points out that the inflationary process does not necessarily go on indefinitely, the currency itself can break down to give way to other selection criteria. One consequence of this would be to make the criteria implicit, that is though applicants for jobs may each have the same objective qualifications, the selection process is built on hidden attributes like style, school or university attended, way of speaking; in general the values which reflect the ethos of the paticular group which is making the selection.

Conclusion

Thus, in sum, if this analysis is correct, there are two contradictory trends at work within society. At one level society is becoming more open, mobility appears to be linked to achievement, and the seeds of a meritocracy are being sown. But at the same time credentialism has the effect of shifting the grounds of selection away from achievement back to ascription. Within openness there is closure. To assess the extent to which a society like England is one in which equality of opportunity is increasing requires that we make a distinction between absolute and relative equality. In absolute terms there is greater equality of opportunity as a consequence of an enlarging occupational structure, but relative equality of opportunity has hardly changed, to reiterate Halsey's data given at the start of this chapter, the relative chance of lower-working-class children changed from less than a quarter to less than half the average chance of university access for the cohort born in 1930-49 as compared to the older 1910-29 cohort. The part played by the education system in this process of reproduction is complex, the school neither completely reflects nor determines the society in which it is located. At best it is a crude transmitter of life-chances, a transmission which is frequently distorted by the factors of class, status and party.

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Source: P. Robinson, 'Education and the structure of opportunity', in *Perspectives on the Sociology of Education*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981, ch. 9.

2

Explaining inequality

Brian Abbey & Dean Ashenden

The 'inequality' debate will one day form a very instructive chapter in the history of ideas; and the sooner the better. For not only does that debate normally omit any historical consideration of the grounds of inequality, but also it completely lacks any sense of its own history as a political and intellectual struggle linked to the course of social change.

Having the appearance of critical social science, the debate in fact has been closely tied to the changing grounds chosen by the privileged in defence of their interests[1] When, in modern times, inequality of educational provision first came under broad attack, the upholders of privilege responded by discovering that there were different types of minds and that these required broader or narrower education (Silver, 1973: 77-84). There ensued a debate on psychological testing which gradually forced the defenders of inequality to yield intellectual and some other ground (Simon, 1971). When subsequent reforms professed to establish equality of educational opportunity, the egalitarians set out to show by detailed demographic studies that access to more and better education still depended on the parents' social position. This latter line of work dominated educational sociology until five or ten years ago.

We are now on the threshold of a third phase which will, it seems, revolve around the theory of knowledge currently espoused by modern conservatives—a theory which emphasises the objective, thing-like character of knowledge and the complex but given order of its internal structures. These emphases, inasmuch as they seem to require first, submission to the one who knows of the many who seek to know, and secondly, the retention of the traditional disciplines with their relatively uncritical focus on content, indirectly bolster conservative educational values and practices. Moreover, again by indirection, this theory of knowledge, through its ramifications, produces and justifies a seemingly natural and objective sorting of the population. Against this the liberals and progressives are employing the sociology of knowledge to show the epistemological assumptions buried in the structure of school curricula, and the socio-political ramifications of teaching such curricula (Young, 1971).

It can't be denied that each phase of this debate has produced useful additions to knowledge; but nor can it be denied that the main engines of inequality have always been untouched by these arguments. We are concerned that badly configured debates about inequality go hand in hand with badly devised remedial schemes. What we might call the Karmel prescription, so influential in Australia in recent years, is just one instance. Those who would defend outright the crucial inequalities which structure our society can rest easily so long as their opponents continue to direct intellectual and political energies so badly. Some recent scholarly contributions to the debate over educational inequality in Australia make important contributions towards a correct configuring of the problem, but also exhibit some of the weaknesses of past studies. We propose to review the work of Toomey, Knight, Connell and Edgar to assess the gains made and point to some obstacles remaining.

The Work of Derek Toomey

Toomey's earlier work was well within the 'deficit' tradition of analysis. The causes of educational inequality were to be found in the characteristics of the home (Toomey, 1973). Although Toomey's main focus was on a lower-class sub-culture, he did attempt to look outward for its sources (Toomey, 1974a; 1974b). But this expansion was achieved by mere addition. Things like work, 'environmental factors', early attainment and so on, were taken (along with S.E.S.) to make 'independent contributions' (Toomey, 1973). Thus although S.E.S. was questioned and supplemented, the underlying positivism was not.[2]

Some elements of this perspective came under sharp attack by Knight, who pointed out that Toomey's psychologism blamed people who were not responsible for their circumstances, and so avoided noticing what really did the damage—the school (Knight, 1974). Through four 'structural determinants' (Knight argued) the school unfairly allocated social roles, seizing especially on differences in sex, ethnicity, race and class. Knight claimed to have a 'system change orientation' (Knight, 1974: 112) and wrote of making schools more to the community than 'gatekeepers to economic life chances' (Knight, 1974: 117).

To Knight's explicit critique was added Connell's implicit one. But before turning to Connell's work we first must note that Toomey's initial analysis has been considerably modified. His latest account[3] shows an expanded reach and deepened insight into the processes of inequality. Toomey has explicitly abandoned the term 'sub-culture'[4] as being inappropriate to Australian circumstances (Toomey, 1976a). Further, his work now attempts to take account both of the school and of its relations with larger social structures (Toomey, 1976a). He has stressed the 'diversity of influences' which operate in the 'welter of social life' (Toomey, 1976a: 4) and the complex and interactive character of social processes. This reaction against the severe limitations of Knight's almost exclusive focus on the school is now combined with an awareness of the need for a 'more dynamic' account (Toomey, 1976a: 2) than can be offered by a 'summarising' variable like S.E.S. (Toomey, 1976a: 5) or statistical techniques like path analysis (Toomey, 1976a: 6-7).

These are important advances, and Toomey has combined them with some things which are well worth hanging onto. But the foundations of that analysis remain intact. First amongst these is Toomey's political purpose: his initial work was conducted in the 'hope that through democratic socialism and the exertion of pressure by disadvantaged groups, piecemeal social reform may be accomplished' (Toomey, 1973: 3). That is still his purpose: 'I hope that this analysis (he writes in 1976) will suggest considerable 'room for manouevre' on the part of policy-makers', and hold open 'the possibility of going some way to equalising opportunities for educational and occupational attainment, albeit within a system based on inequality' (Toomey, 1976a: 2). In effect, Toomey has decided that there's not much point in mounting a full-blooded critique of a structure that seems omnipotent and immovable: it's better to look where the 'room for manouevre' is found. We support and respect Toomey for his acknowledgement of the political character of this debate, but will try to show that his political perspective is so constricted as to mar his analysis.

Toomey's political decision probably depends on, and seems more reasonable in the light of, his belief that 'we appear to have . . . a welter of 'relatively autonomous' influences which operate within the interstices of the larger social structure' (1976a: 15). This is a *de facto* separation of the macro and micro perspectives.[5] The larger structures become a 'context' within which the parts of life defined as relevant to educational inequality stand separate and largely untouched, and move according to their own rhythms, purposes and logic. This view of things leaves Toomey free to search for the 'independent variables'.

What's more, Toomey has not emancipated himself from the politics of the deficit theory. His attention remains firmly focussed on the 'disadvantaged'[6] and he is still concerned to do things to them. As with all forms of deficit theory, whether in the field of education or in social welfare or criminology or poverty studies, the tendency is to blame the victim—whether censoriously or sympathetically makes no real difference.

The Work of R. W. Connell

The tradition which Toomey's work embodies came under sharp criticism in a long chapter 'Class structure and personal socialisation', published by Bob Connell in 1972.[7] Connell developed a quite new line of attack, but began it on the home ground of the dominant school: the notion that the origins of children's academic performance lay in the values and attitudes prevailing in the home. Connell began by shrewdly separating adults' expectations from their values and attitudes, arguing that the former were merely observations about existing reality rather than influences on it (Connell, 1972: 52). We will return to this distinction and concentrate for the moment on Connell's treatment of values and attitudes. He argued that adults' values and attitudes would influence the educational achievement of their children, but that there were no class-based differences in them to account for the massive and massively-documented patterns of educational inequality (Connell, 1972: 52: 1974).

This posed two questions: first, if values and attitudes didn't produce inequality, what did? Second, what explains the uniformity of values and attitudes? Connell's answer to the first is speculative: he entertains five candidates (ranging from heredity to differences in material circumstances) and concludes that 'some seem to be plausible, some do not . . . it seems likely that they interact and influence each other, and that their effects cumulate . . .' (Connell, 1972: 53).

The answer to the second question—what accounts for the uniformity of values and attitudes—will be found, he says, not in the myth of the classless society but, on the contrary, in recognising the success of one class in dominating another—in this case by controlling the manufacture and distribution of ideas. Children are 'socialised' not into classes, but into class society. The Australian ruling class has achieved a near-perfect ideological hegemony, and thus has been able to reproduce the class structure virtually without anyone noticing (Connell, 1972: 59-61).

It was Connell's work which first attracted our attention. In part this was a consequence of his achievement; his chapter led the way towards putting the problem of understanding individual experience into a broad social and historical context; in particular, it attended not just to the placement of individuals in the class structure, but to the reproduction of that structure. But there were also weaknesses within Connell's explanation which seemed to be intimately connected with a problem which we alluded to above—the matter of the separation of macro and micro perspectives.

Perhaps we can best develop this point and our critique of Connell's position by starting at the same point as he did in attacking the dominant school—at the level of empirical evidence.

Readers will recall that Connell insisted on the primacy of class analysis, but then assumed that because the surveys showed no significant class-patterning of values and attitudes, there weren't any. This conclusion is then used to reject 'working-class subculture' explanations of unequal educational outcomes. Contrary to this method, we would rather retain the class perspective and question the evidence.

A debate about whether the working-class did or did not have distinctive values and attitudes was conducted in the United States by Merton and Hyman (Merton, 1949; Hyman, 1953). One suggestive means of resolving it was provided by Rodman's notion of 'value-stretch' (1963). In England, Frank Parkin (1972) posited the same kind of notion, suggesting that a large sector of the working-class has a propensity to 'negotiate' for themselves a modified version of the dominant value-system. Both Rodman's and Parkin's work suggests the possibility that situational determinants operate on the choice of values made by working-class individuals and groups. To be more precise: the complex situational determinants would dictate the values espoused or brought into play, and, most important, the interpretation and rules of application given to the values espoused. Some determinants might be long-term (e.g., the structural situation of an individual's work-group; the family's class-history), and some might be short-term (Who is evoking the response or asking the questions? Where is the questioning going on? What form does the question take? and so on).

We would be surprised if something very like this negotiating was not going on when white-collar interviewers inspected working-class values and attitudes. If so, it would suggest that some of the evidence for cultural uniformity across classes which Connell cites doesn't mean what it says. Our suspicions harden into conviction when we examine Connell's use of the term 'hegemony'.

It will be remembered that he explained the absence of significant class-based differences in values and attitudes as being a result of bourgeois hegemony. He seems to say that working-class culture or consciousness is obliterated and is replaced by the dominant culture or value-system. This is certainly not the sense which Gramsci attached to the term, nor is it consistent with historical materialism. Rather, as Gramsci puts it, there is a 'contrast between thought and action, i.e., the co-existence of two conceptions of the world, one affirmed in words and the other displayed in effective action . . .'. This 'contrast between thought and action', he argued, 'cannot but be the expression of profounder contrasts of a social historical order . . .'. Gramsci speaks of the subordinate group as having 'its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception which manifests itself in action, but occasionally, and in flashes . . .' even while verbally it affirms a conception not its own but adopted 'for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination' (Gramsci, 1971: 327).

In this light the operation of a bourgeois hegemony is best understood as a fragmentation and disorganisation of the culture and consciousness of the subordinate class—not its obliteration. Working-class culture may be denied wider articulation, made to seem partial and inadequate, and publicly labelled as inferior. But it is not made to disappear. The contradictions between the dominant and the fragmented subordinate culture remain, always present in informal groups and working-class institutions and individuals. Rodman's and Parkin's work gives us some guides to the 'patterns of management' evolved by and in the subordinate class in their efforts to cope. A richer insight into the experience of 'coping' is provided by Sennett and Cobb (1972).

Of course we raise here the question of the relations between structure and ideology, and the nature of both. We will leave this, as a theoretical question, to one side for the moment. Instead we merely point out that much of the relationship between structure and ideology may be understood if we think about how they intersect and interact in the individual. And this brings us to our third criticism of Connell's argument.

We recall his distinction between 'expectations' (on the one hand) and 'values and attitudes' (on the other), and note the implicit assumption that differences in the one didn't bear on the other, or on behaviour. Is this likely? Are people's values, attitudes and expectations kept in compartments, or do they rather permeate, flavour and act on each other and on the whole of personal organisation?

Now let us recall an implication of Connell's use of the term 'hegemony'—that one group of people can fill up another group of people with this or that set of ideas or dispositions. We have here a conception of the ingestion of culture and of the formation of people which depicts 'the person' as a passive aggregate of more-or-less discrete attributes which exist at a rather shallow, accessible and cognitive level, and largely independent of situation. Against this we conceive of the person as a self-constructing, organic, not-so-divisible entity which exists in part at semi- or sub-conscious levels, and which performs in different ways in response to different situations.

This conception is, we think, assumed in Gramsci's understanding of the operation of ideological hegemony. It would lead us to think of the contradictions between the dominant and the fragmented subordinate culture as a central substance of personal experience, issuing perhaps in discrete personal characteristics (the having, or lack of, 'self-esteem'/'sense of competence' etc.), but more likely suffusing the individual's thought and action. It is of the essence of Gramsci's conception that these internalised tensions and contradictions do not merely exist in or arise out of an abstract war of ideas; rather they embody and focus the tensions and contradictions of social life.

This returns us to the question of the **structure** of social life, and its relationship to consciousness and culture. One of the most basic deficiencies of the literature on this question, and of the participants in the debate we've been reviewing, is the confusion of **class** and **S.E.S.**. Even Connell, whose position is distinguished by its attention to the whole structure of society and its insistence on **class** as a concept which illuminates that structure, makes this mistake. His argument grows out of a discussion which relies not on class, but on S.E.S.

The theoretical differences between a marxist concept of class and social stratification variables like S.E.S. are as great as the political gulf which separates their respective proponents. As Balbus points out, 'Whereas for Marx the criteria of class position were **opposite** attributes and **opposing** interests, for the social stratificationists the criterion of class position is the individual's **relative** share of the **same** attribute' (Balbus, 1971: 39). Classifications based on this gradation concept of class are thus undertaken with a view to describing a given society along a particular dimension, not with a view to discerning in-built structural conflicts and contradictory interests. That is, the stratificationists tot up and variously arrange the **symptoms** of inequality: they do not go all out to uncover what **generates** it. From a political standpoint, it is clear that a view of class which encourages us to believe that we can move into a higher class by taking a night-school diploma, upping our stock of consumer durables, or shifting to a better neighbourhood will also encourage at best a reformist politics. Finally, and important for our case as it is to unfold, the stratificationists take the individual as **consumer** rather than as **producer**. S.E.S. or other such constructs can in no way be treated as equivalent to, or a rough approximation of, a concept of class as understood by marxists.'

The Work of Don Edgar

It is apparent that Edgar (1976) has avoided the worst pitfalls which come from confusing S.E.S. and class, and that this has enabled him to make some significant advances. Edgar proceeds in the following fashion. Modern capitalism at once produces the free labourer and requires an ever increasing number of ever-more complex and sharply differentiated skills. This complex differentiation of the work-force blurs the old class divisions, so that competition between groups within the large and growing salary and wage earning class looms largest in most people's understanding of society. This submersion of inter-class antagonism is furthered by a fair degree of social mobility, which serves to prevent the growth of class culture and stable class identifications.

Social ranking depends upon access to the better-rewarded skills. Competition for these is unequal. This competition is unequal because the individual's access to them is influenced by his/her father's position in the division of labour. What is it about the father's position that counts? Not its status, prestige, or even, in any simple way its income, but the characteristics of the work being performed. Which characteristics? Three: the type of skill; the place in the authority structure; and membership of consumption or distributive groupings (Edgar, 1976: 14).

Relying on replications of work done in the U.S. by Kohn and Schooler (1971, 1973), Edgar shows that there are significant correlations between various attitudes and values of workers, and the character of their work. Workers whose jobs rank 'well' on the three measures Edgar employs are more likely to develop what he calls a sense of competence, and this is likely to be passed to their kids, who, thus armed, do better at school than they otherwise would (Edgar, 1976: 15-16).

Edgar has made several useful contributions. He turns our attention away from the realm of the private sphere (life-style/values and attitudes/etc.) and from externalities (status/prestige/etc.), and directs it instead to the sphere of production; and not merely to its static shadow—'occupation'—but to the production relations of work. Moreover, Edgar is attempting to bridge 'the macro-micro gap' we referred to earlier, to see the generative mechanisms which would show how the apparent 'gap' dissolves into a series of concrete inter-connected events.

But on closer examination we find some important problems with Edgar's analysis and it is to these we now turn. The one shortcoming which seems to us to lie at the root of all others is Edgar's failure to understand the power and scope of capital. We say this despite his occasional willingness to refer to Australia as 'capitalist', to note (albeit in passing) 'the basic economic class differences between those who own the means of production and those who do not', and to make similar brief remarks with a marxian flavour (Edgar, 1976: 9). These are, for Edgar, in the nature of ritual observances; they form no part of his theoretical foundation.

The social model upon which Edgar actually premises his analysis is hard to characterise briefly, because it is in no sense a structural totality. Rather, society is implicitly seen as an infinite and characterless space upon which play disparate forces such as technology, social classes, skills, ideologies, property systems, and so forth: capitalism, when it appears, is merely one large force among several.

By contrast, the marxist point of view, which we are urging here, sees capital, understood as a specific pattern of social relationships with its own internal logic, as the basic structuring force in the social formation.[10]

If we are right, Edgar's inadequate grasp of the ramifications of the concept of capitalism leads him at several places into error, or at least onto dubious ground, when he is discussing the contemporary class structure. Implicitly supposing Marx's to be a two-class theory, and certain that such simplicity could not comprehend the growth of what he calls 'the property-less middle-class' and what he sees as the variety of groupings around him, Edgar turns to Weber for an account of these developments. Thus guided he proposes to rank people according chiefly to the marketability of the skills they possess.

Our criticisms—and they can be no more than assertions here—are two. First, concerning the often-made point about the growth of the property-less middle-class: it certainly betrays a shallow understanding of capitalism to suppose that the expansion of wage- and salary-earning sectors necessarily indicates a diminution of the social power of capital. What might be more easily shown from the same evidence is the concentration of capital and the expansion of the capitalist mode of production to embrace productive sectors and elements of the work-force previously outside it. If one's gaze is confined to the ownership of property by an individual as the basis of the individual's socio-economic power, one necessarily misses the growth of the power and reach of capital as a structural force.

Second, Edgar is wrong to suppose that the marxian perspective is inherently unable to accommodate divisions within the proletariat. It is true that this problem has been neglected by marxists for a long time, but very interesting work has been done in recent years by writers such as Andre Gorz (1973, 1973-4), Theotonio Dos Santos (1970), Al Szymanski (1972), Francesca Freedman (1975), Howard Watchel (1974), Nicos Poulantzas (1975) and others. These writers, unlike Edgar, have situated the divisions among the proletariat within the logic of the capitalist mode of production, rather than seeing them as breaches of that logic and necessarily founded outside it. An illustration: Edgar suggests that the increasingly complex division of labour is brought into being, not by the needs of capitalism, but by something quite different, the needs of technology (which latter he seems to regard, conventionally, as an independent suprahuman force). Contrast this with the sort of marxian view put here by Freedman in her article 'The Internal Structure of the American Proletariat':

> On the one hand, the expansion of capital necessitates divisions within the working population, corresponding to the creation of new use-value functions for labour. On the other hand, this labour is **unified** under the wage-relation. Based as it is on antagonistic relations between classes, capitalism develops an ideology that is authoritarian and hierarchical in nature. It responds to the **objective** unity of the working-class by reproducing authoritarian and hierarchical relationships within that class, utilising them to divide it on a social and **subjective** basis (Freedman, 1975: 45).

This line is developed in various ways. We are far from claiming that this work is already a fully-elaborated and self-evidently superior alternative to the approach which Edgar and most other writers adopt more or less automatically. Indeed, it would be sufficient for us here to claim only that the matter is not so easily disposed of as Edgar and others seem to think. But a little more can be claimed for the marxist approach. It has the merit of avoiding the reification of technology, of capturing one of the most important but least noticed (and therefore least questioned) means by which a social order is reproduced, and thus reminding us that a system of production, according to Marx:

> must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals, rather it is a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part (Marx and Engels, 1964: 31-32).

We might also make brief mention here of the fact that our 'definite mode of life' includes a vast amount of labour which is not wage-labour, and which is therefore easily ignored. We refer, of course, to domestic labour,[11] and Edgar's neglect of it is characteristic of the literature. Of course it is true that women's experience is shaped by their husbands' place in the relations of capitalist production, but it is also shaped by the social relations of domestic production. Both structures, and experience in and through them, must be comprehended.

Next—concerning mobility; again we must start from Edgar's understanding of the nature of capitalism. According to him 'it won't do to say simply that economic classes . . . exist in the structure of capitalism because that is tautological and unilluminating' (1976: 9). 'The real question', he continues, 'is whether these 'exploited workers of the system' recognise (a) that they are different, have a common style of life, similar attitudes and beliefs . . . and (b) that other classes with different attitudes and beliefs exist . . .' (1976: 10).

Refusing to see that class division is integral to capitalism, Edgar proceeds to reduce the existence of classes to the question of class consciousness. As if the two were the same! As if social phenomena cannot exercise an influence on other developments unless the individuals involved are directly aware of them.

Since, according to Edgar, mobility impairs the formation of stable and acknowledged class identifications, it would seem to follow that it actually tends to weaken the class structure. If we have read Edgar correctly on this, he has inadvertently taken a big backward step. Connell's first essay, discussed earlier, makes the distinction between class places and class agents; and it should be clear to anyone that a degree of social mobility is an integral part of class structure, not a solvent of it.[12]

Several of the previous points seem to call for another one—our last in this vein; a word or two about what we'll call Edgar's rather naïve empiricism. We saw something of that quality in the quotations reproduced just above. We suspect, but cannot argue here, that this stems from or is associated with a rather simplistic notion of structure. Marx once complained to Engels that '. . . the philistine's and vulgar economist's **way of looking at things stems** . . . from the fact that it is only the direct **form of manifestation of relations** that is reflected in their brains and not their **inner connection**' (Geras, 1972: 284).

> Thus, for Marx, . . . 'structures' should not be confused with visible social relations but constitute a **level of reality** invisible but present behind the visible social relations. The logic of the latter . . . depend upon the functioning of the hidden structures . . . (Godelier, 1972: 366).

We have concentrated up to this point on problems in Edgar's analysis of the nature of class society. But there may also be problems with the way in which he conceives of its embodiment in people.

The approach taken to educational inequality in **Social Class Differences and the Structure of Education** requires an understanding of a series of relationships: father's work experience to father's character/outlook to child to child's academic performance. Edgar's account of these relationships is sketchy to say the least. On the whole he relies on correlations between certain aspects of certain of his key variables.

This is not necessarily illegitimate. As Edgar himself points out, it's early days yet for the analysis of the real processes. In the meantime he suggests the complexion of the relationships by introducing the twin concepts of 'competence' and 'sense of competence'; these are meant to draw on the inter-actionist perspective he has elaborated elsewhere. So Edgar is clearly aware that the 'inequality' problem demands a unified account of a continuous reality (i.e., it demands that we 'bridge the gap').

But it seems to us that the conception of the production of people and culture implied in Edgar's use of the terms 'competence' and 'sense of competence' is very like that in Connell's analysis. In particular, these concepts often seem to refer to attributes which express themselves in a way which is quite independent of the experience or practice in question. Worse, to summarise the consequences of life in class society in terms of having/not having or having more/less of 'a sense of competence' scarcely does justice to that experience. Not just because there is more that could be said; but because, we suspect, people are not organised in that way. As we put it above, '. . . the contradictions between the dominant and subordinate culture remain always present in . . . individuals'. The absence of tension and contradiction in Edgar's account of experience is consistent with, and perhaps a consequence of, his blindness to the turbulence and contradiction of capitalist society. Rather than Edgar's idea of more/less competence, we would turn for assistance to Sennett and Cobb's concept of 'the hidden injuries of class'.

Conclusions

Our argument implies certain conclusions about the 'inequality debate'. First amongst these is the recognition that considerable gains have been made. We instance Knight's recognition that the school is an active social institution; Toomey's awareness that the processes in question are complex and interactive, and that they shape and are shaped by people's feelings; Connell's emphasis on historical and structural analysis; and Edgar's abandonment of S.E.S. and his move towards understanding the social relations of work.

But these gains need, first, to be supplemented in various ways. We should get much closer to the lives of individuals. What is required is observation of the kind done by anthropologists, and some very exhaustive and self-conscious interviewing. The experience and behaviour examined must be understood as fraught with contradiction and ambiguity. The scope of research should be expanded outwards, too, and Edgar's excursion into the world of work sets a good example. So does his habit of looking at the relationships between and amongst individuals and institutions.

But research into the 'inequality problem' needs more than supplementing. There is a problem with the problem. From its earliest beginnings the analysis of inequality has proceeded without, *inter alia*, a clear distinction between agents and places (individual and structure). It has been fascinated by agents and, worse, by the movement of some agents. Beginning by putting structure out of mind, it has necessarily ended by not recognising that the very thing it stares at—the mobility of individuals—is an integral part of a structure. Small wonder that quite un-surprising and relatively unimportant things—the marginal differences between relatively small numbers of unusually mobile, or immobile, individuals—have taken the appearance of great intellectual puzzles and even greater political problems.

It is clear that the work we have surveyed (especially that of Connell and Edgar) is exempt from some of these strictures. But not all. It may be regarded as having stretched the 'inequality problematic' to its limits, rather than breaking decisively with it.

The question of the precise relationship between two problematics—the one already heavily elaborated, the other still in embryo—is an absorbing one. At the theoretical level it asks whether class analysis is to incorporate stratification analysis, or to supersede it. But it also requires a consideration of the political character of intellectual work. The problem is raised too rarely, and we cannot hope to deal with it here. But it does seem clear to us that the four writers surveyed have employed a perspective which forces them up against a number of dilemmas: work inside the system or out; reform or revolution; personal liberation or social emancipation. Knight, Toomey and Edgar have opted, with varying degrees of explicitness, for the first of each of these pairs, Connell for the second.[11]

The problematic which will illuminate and transform these choices is, as we've noted, far from being fully elaborated. But we do think that there are some clear methodological precepts to guide its development. They are four.

First, social reality is a whole, constituted by relationships. As Raymond Williams put it (writing about art):

> as we discover the nature of the relation between an individual project and a collective mode, we find that we are analysing, as two forms of the same process, both its active composition and its conditions of composition, and in either direction this is a complex of extending relationships (Williams, 1973: 16).

Second, this continuous reality is a process of production based on nothing but the historical interactions of people in and through their material world.

Third, that process of production and reproduction is fundamentally and pervasively ordered by the **capitalist** mode of production. (This means by the way, that the 'world of work' can only be understood as an aspect of the social relations of production).

Last, in attaching the term 'capitalist' to the relations of production, the marxist schema attributes meanings to the concept 'class' which are quite distinct from those of bourgeois social science, most notably in an insistence on the constitutive and generative character of contradiction and conflict throughout social life and individual experience.

The new problematic must be self-consciously developed as a guide to practical action against the inequalities of class society. This time it must help us choose the field of battle according to an understanding of capitalism rather than leading us to fight on grounds chosen by capitalism's defenders.

FOOTNOTES

1. The raw materials for a construction of this kind are to be found in Silver (1973).
2. This is rather more than we can say for the analysis offered by Marjoribanks in an edition of this Journal appearing after this article was submitted (Marjoribanks, 1977). Indeed, Marjoribanks' concluding remarks seem to us to be a fairly pointed criticism of the concepts and methods his study employs.
3. We will here be quoting from and referring to an unpublished paper which is a longer version of Toomey, 1976b.
4. The term was first rejected in 1974 (Toomey, 1974b: 3), though the sense survives in that paper. Toomey seems to have been embarrassed by the connotations which adhered to his account of working-class subculture, and rightly so. His was a conception of an inferior culture, and he implicitly blamed working-class people for having it. It is the notions of deficit and blame that have to go, not the idea that there is a working-class subculture.
5. This is a problem we have noticed in education studies and in social studies generally. There is a difficulty in realising that experience and society, culture and structure, are parts of a continuous reality. We have dealt with the question in a little more detail in an earlier paper (Abbey and Ashenden, 1976).
6. We must record the same criticism of Marjoribanks' paper, referred to in note 2 above.
7. Connell has since published a revised version of this essay (Connell: 1977), reflecting something of the developing flexibility and subtlety of his work, though we think that the burden of our criticism of the 1972 version still applies to the new one.
8. The book is imaginative, sensitive, and theoretically incoherent. For some of the problems with Sennett and Cobb's analysis, see Markoff and Lembke (1976). But see also a reply to Markoff and Lembke (O'Kelly, 1976).
9. For a useful basic account of these differences as they apply to the inequality questions, see Stolzman and Gamberg (1974).
10. We note here the recent appearance in the U.S. of an important and highly accomplished analysis of schooling which shares some of Edgar's concerns and, like him, draws on Weberian premises (Collins, 1977). Since Collins' work appeared after this article was submitted, we can only note that he avoids some of the difficulties which Edgar encountered, though we are inclined to think that his notion of a market in cultural goods is quite incapable of replacing the theory of capital as a unifying concept.
11. The literature debating the role of women in the capitalist relations of production is enormous and growing fast. We cannot say anything about the question here. Most of the best work on the subject has appeared in **New Left Review** or the **Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists** and the references to articles by Seccombe (1973, 1975), and Gardiner et al. (1975) in those journals provide a good starting point.
12. Toomey almost faces up to this uncomfortable fact when he notices that '. . . any concern to improve the opportunities of poorer children . . . is in the short run likely to reinforce the meritocratic process' (Toomey, 1976a: 23). For an example of the grotesque consequences of not even dreaming that the problem exists, see Blandy and Goldsworthy (1975).
13. We have already instanced Toomey's sense of the political options open to us (see p. 3 above). Edgar can acknowledge that 'of course the very structure of a capitalist society militates against these (disadvantaged) groups ever being in control of their environment to the point when they threaten the system itself'; but then feels compelled to assert that 'the only realistic path to change is to restructure those aspects of the system that cause disadvantage and direct every effort at improving the levels of control of those groups at present deprived' (Edgar, 1975: 5). Knight's indifference to the structures which surround and generate schooling is matched by a political myopia: 'Schools could be institutions where individual change can be encouraged; where teachers and students can effect the sort of leadership that enhances decision-making skills, encourages cultural initiatives and initiates political competence' (Knight, 1974: 117). Connell 'stands Knight on his head' by ignoring the autonomy of the schools and over-stating social constraints (Connell, 1972: 55, 57, 61).

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Source: B. Abbey & D. Ashenden, 'Explaining inequality', *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1978, pp. 5-13.

3

Explaining inequality: a reply to Abbey and Ashenden

Don Edgar

Abbey and Ashenden unfortunately misread my views on both class structure and the nature of competence. The main point of linking the two concepts was to return to Marx's insistence that 'social reality be seen as a whole, constituted by relationships'. People interact with one another in and through their material world, so we must develop a theory that links both the 'objective' structure of that material world and the 'subjective' limits to action *(praxis)* that arise from within it. I have never supposed 'that the Marxian perspective is inherently unable to accommodate divisions within the proletariat', but rather assert that Weber and Giddens both have better explanations of **how** the capitalist system manages to develop, maintain and continue to advance from such divisions.

Nor does the concept of competence imply an individualistic, subjective, symbolic-interactionist stance. If Abbey and Ashenden had read more carefully they might have seen some of the answers to the very dilemmas they say still exist.

Elsewhere I have argued that 'the potential for alternate world-views will depend in part on the open versus closed nature of the authority system, partly on the range for *praxis* available to each individual through his access to varied institutional spheres, and partly on the links between institutional spheres and authority structures provided by group loyalties and ideologies' (Edgar, 1974a). Furthermore, it is inherent in the nature of capitalism (a description of Australian society that is not used 'merely in passing') that dominant power structures, through the material conditions of the division of labour and work relations, will limit both the range for *praxis* for the dominated **and** colour the nature of their group loyalties and ideologies. It is here that 'false consciousness' becomes central and that it becomes vital to talk not only of actual skills (the equipment for competence) but also of feelings of efficacy (the 'competent self'). For the structure of knowledge is also the structure of ignorance, the social distribution of power and of competence have implicit parallels in the distribution of powerlessness, incompetence and impotence. And *if* a Marxist analysis of the relations of education to other aspects of social structure is to make any sense at all, we must explain **how** it is that objective 'class' position can continue to be denied, ignored, to be of little impact on those actions of the oppressed that might potentially alter 'the system'. No-one would deny that material conditions are prime determinants of social relations; that is in fact the point. Our theories of education must confront and explain how education serves to reflect, articulate, reinforce, or potentially change the dominant power relations of capitalist society and their associated ideological-cultural 'accounts' of 'reality'.

As I have also pointed out (Edgar, 1976a), the dogma of individualism is central to capitalism's maintenance despite the existence of objective inequalities. As China's education system (at least from the 1966 Cultural Revolution until the present drastic reorganisation of the education system along 'capitalist-elitist-productivity-growth' lines) revealed, a 'new individualism' is possible, where worth is measured in terms of social contribution, and individual excellence is fostered without reward in monetary or status terms. The crucial difference was that the material structure of society was brought into line with a different ideology. As Steve Andors has suggested, China had attempted at least to transform the dominant vocabulary of motives:

> The perception that everyone is doing a fair share of hard work, and that people in positions of authority are not usurping privileges, is a potent incentive . . . In their realization that nobody likes to look another person's fool, the Chinese have tapped a major source of ego incentive in the context of participatory management (Andors, 1974).

Under capitalism, it is the main "pedagogic work" of the schools (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) to structure and process children into that essentially capitalist ethos of individualism which sets each against all and denies the development of different forms of competence and *praxis*.

It is here that the theory of competence pursued by me diverges most drastically from that espoused by the Australian Schools Commission and from the version inferred by Abbey and Ashenden. Those authors can be forgiven, perhaps, because the terms used betray their origins in bourgeois social science. The notion of 'equipment for competence', elaborated by me in terms of 'marketable capacities', sounds very culture-bound and limited to socially-defined and socially-rewarded skills. And the notion of 'the competent self' sounds like a very individualistic, subjectivist trap. But the latter is meant to refer to (and this is elaborated elsewhere—see Edgar, 1974b), a socially distributed experience of efficacy, a sense of power, a 'view of the self as competent, as in control of one's own environment, that enables people to take advantage of their opportunities' (Edgar, 1975a: 4). The owner-controllers in a capitalist society have the **resources** to be effective, their children grow up seeing their parents being effective and feeling themselves to be at least potentially in control; the have-nots, the controlled, the oppressed, do not experience control (except perhaps over their private family plot) and do not expect to be in control.

Abbey and Ashenden correctly point out that Connell's version of 'hegemony' departs from and is theoretically weaker than that of Gramsci. But they miss the real significance of this observation. Gramsci suggests that bourgeois hegemony does not obliterate working-class consciousness but rather involves 'the coexistence of two conceptions of the world, one affirmed in words and the other displayed in effective action' (Gramsci, 1971: 327). Abbey and Ashenden fail to go on to note that expressions of educational and occupational aspirations may well be the 'words' being affirmed 'for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination' (Gramsci's terms), and that expectations may be closer to a display of 'effective action'. All they add is that 'much of the relationship between structure and ideology may be understood if we think about how they intersect and interact in the individual'. This is precisely what the theory of competence and its social distribution attempts to do and is also why I insisted (as against Connell) that differences in educational expectations indicate 'the existence of a recognition between social groups that their mobility chances are different, in other words the existence of what might be social classes with common mobility chances' (Edgar, 1976b). The notion of 'coping' used by Sennett and Cobb in **The Hidden Injuries of Class** (1972) is close to my notion of competence, because it involves both the actual skills available to groups and individuals within the social structure and the feelings of efficacy or powerlessness that arise out of their relative success in coping with it. The educational structure is so inextricably linked with the social distribution of resources for competence (property, money capital, cultural capital, particular marketable capacities, etc.), that it both (a) inhibits effective action (through its handling of credentialling **and** content), and (b) teaches the language of submission and intellectual subordination, through which legitimised aspirations can be separated from expectations. I agree with Abbey and Ashenden that the individual should be conceived of as a 'self-constructing, organic, not-so-divisible entity' (the competent, or incompetent, self?) rather than as 'a passive aggregate of more-or-less discrete attributes', and that this dynamic tension of self embodies 'the tensions and contradictions of social life'. But they then go on to distort the dynamic notion of competence by presenting it as a straw man merely 'having/not having or having more/less of 'a sense of competence' '.

There is no space here to comment upon Abbey and Ashenden's assertions about my 'inadequate grasp of the ramifications of the concept of capitalism', except to say that I do not recognise my model of society 'as an infinite and characterless space'. The whole thrust of the paper referred to was to analyse the complexities (as opposed to the simplicities of many 'Marxist' versions) of modern capitalism and the central role of education within it. There is no supposition that the social power of capital has diminished, or any 'refusal to see that class division is integral to capitalism . . . to reduce the existence of classes to the question of class consciousness'. Of course the two are not the same. The point of the education debate, of hegemony as a concept, however, is to explain **why** that class division is not reflected (or to what extent it **is** reflected), in the consciousness and effective actions of those who suffer from it. The supposition is rather that with advancing technological complexity (not a reified 'technology'), marketable capacities become increasingly important as (cultural) capital, and the structure of the education system more and more central to the reproduction of the capitalist system and to its extension. In a recent review of the Bowles and Gintis book (Beneria, 1977) it is suggested 'the potential rebelliousness of rule-oriented people is underestimated by Bowles and Gintis—insofar as the studies on which they base their analysis show the external rather than the true attitudes of those who have been compelled to follow rules in order to survive in the wage labor system'. And Beneria cites as 'true attitudes . . . those that surface when the contradictions generated by the circumstances in which people live become extreme or when the consciousness of oppression becomes generalised' (e.g., ghetto schools, the women's movement, some alternative schools). This is the crux of Gramsci's view of hegemony, and the task of a new sociology of education is to spell out the varying conditions that give rise to those contradictions and forms of consciousness and action.

Abbey and Ashenden are right to stress 'the political character of intellectual work', but here again they fail to develop the point. It is a point most confused by the standard approach to educational content and the curriculum, and is a crucial aspect of 'cultural capital' that Abbey and Ashenden ignore. Their tendency to downplay the central role of the school curriculum and the structures of educational institutions (apart from some passing reference to Knight's work) leads them away from the point. The point is that a 'competent self' within a capitalist system **does** mean a privatised, subjective, individualistic and competitive self. But it need not be so. Surely the message of the counter-culture of the 1960s is that those Reichian aspects that could be absorbed within the system—free expression, exploring the inner self, sexual freedom, 'flower power', drug exploration etc.—**were** absorbed. Those that contained some threat to individualism and hinted at a new form of competence—communal sharing, group political action, untied marriage, survival for life (cf. competition for growth), etc.—were denigrated and suppressed by the media. They were also the qualities less easily adopted by a young generation fighting against but socialised within an affluent capitalist system of social relations.

In this light, all the rhetoric of the Australian Schools Commission (Edgar, 1975b) about community-school interaction, about competence and removing inequality of 'opportunity', falls into the same trap. For it stresses individual competences rather than group capacities to cope, and it puts opportunity within the framework of existing curriculum structures and currently marketable skills. It says little about competence in 'political' terms, of shared efficacy, of groups sharing in the decision-making process, of the curriculum being taught not as arbitrary subjects but as means to ends of 'effectiveness' (Edgar, 1976c). A new initiative in Victoria through the Schools Commission Country Education Project stresses 'cooperative competence' and a broader communal involvement in education, because we feel a continued emphasis on the development of individual competence plays into the hands of a system which divides and conquers.[1] It is political know-how that counts and it may well be that we can produce more competent, efficacious, self-confident people by building on and sharing community competences than through individualised efforts, which means above all breaking down traditional educational 'sorting' processes.

It is here I would maintain that theories of curriculum and the 'sociology of knowledge' dogma being promulgated by the Open University team have missed their mark. The curriculum **is** vital. Not in terms of whether History or Maths. or Social Studies are taught, but because they are symbols which help schools **legitimise** their function in preserving the ideology and material structures of capitalism.

Pierre Bourdieu tackles this from one direction and an unpublished paper by Meyer and Rowan (1977; see also Kamens, 1977) tackles it from another. Far from academics and teachers being 'useless', 'non-workers', their work is, to my mind, central to the structure of capitalism. For we (despite ourselves) do 'academic work', 'pedagogic work' which passes on an individualistic, academic value-structure that denies other forms of competence any legitimacy or social reward. And it is **not** the **content** of what we teach that matters so much as the framework within which that content is manifested. Lest I be misunderstood, it is not the content as curriculum experts discuss subject matter that counts. Rather it is the content seen in another sense.

Perhaps the core aspect of educational content is that most basic competence of all, literacy and even numeracy. Not, I stress, grammar or literature or maths. problems as outlined in a school syllabus; but the modes of speech, the avoidance of tell-tale poor expression and, above all, the ability to manipulate ideas. In pushing the mechanics of literacy and numeracy, we forget their basic **political** content, as the equipment for competence, for efficacy, for being in control of our environment instead of being victims controlled by those who can manipulate ideas and argue us down. It is this basic linguistic and communicative competence (Habermas, 1972: 190, 196), that lies at the core of political power and impotence. Bourdieu refers to this as a subtle relationship between the mastery of academic language and the conservation of power.

The same point applies to the content of other school 'subjects'. In how many schools is history taught as related to the social structures of capitalism? Where is economics or consumer education taught as political economy? What science teacher relates his subject matter to problems of growth, environment-mastery, other than in trendy and incidental style? Where is the depth of analysis of other cultures through their language styles put above mechanical linguistics? The central fact is that knowledge is divided and sub-divided, so that children get a smattering of everything but a deep analysis of nothing. The content of our typifications is very thin and is kept thin by both schools and the media (Mueller, 1970; see also Schutz, 1970: 111-122. And that is the essence of cultural reproduction. The few who stay on (and how long they must stay on to get it becomes attenuated with advancing technology) manage to gain some insight into the system, some notion of how to use their resources in the pursuit of control. It is seldom a **critical** insight because most 'academic work' is directed against that, but it is an insight that preserves and maintains their initial advantage in the 'personality market'. That is why repeatedly (Jencks, 1972; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) we find socio-economic status is **still** the major determinant of what type of academic qualifications and career opportunities are available.

This last raises the third aspect of curriculum importance which differs from traditional views. Clearly the content, the skills learned, the forms of expertise developed by certain groups and individuals **is** important in their holding or achieving position in the market. At times their marketable capacities may even take them across class boundaries and into positions of real power. But this is rare, precisely for the reasons I outlined in my paper 'Social Class Differences and the Structure of Education'. As a recent Bureau of Statistics report (*The Age, 26/7/77*) indicated, a major restructuring of the Australian workforce has taken place between 1974 and 1977, with a huge decline in manufacturing jobs almost matched by the growth of employment in the service sector.

Thus students with skills in manufacturing (textiles, motor vehicles, clothing, printing, industrial equipment, building, transport, etc.) find themselves now at a disadvantage because their marketable capacities do not mesh with current market 'needs'. Those needs increasingly demand competence in service roles, education, health, retailing, banking, entertainment, public service.

Students with such competences are more and more likely to be those with some mastery of communication skills who possess also the symbolic tickets of success. As Bowles and Gintis demonstrate, schools for the well-to-do stress participation and internalised standards of control, thus preparing students for self-employment and professional jobs (Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

This brings me to another aspect of the schools as institutions closely articulated with and reproductive of the existing class relationships.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) point out (as have others before them) that the schools' main role is sorting and accrediting. Their term is 'credentialling', and they argue that controls over this 'ritual classification' are very tightly, not loosely organised. 'In fact, the ritual classifications are the basic components of the theory (or ideology) of education used by modern societies, and schools gain enormous resources by conforming to them, incorporating them and controlling them'. What Meyer and Rowan mean is that the educational ritual of 'schooling' rests on a legitimate language that links educational and corporate identities in a societal 'identity market'. Such a series of accepted typifications—classifications of schools into types (high, technical), levels (primary, secondary, kindergarten), grades, subjects (English, Maths., History) and pupil types (male, female, academic, vocational, manual)—rests upon what Meyer and Rowan call a 'logic of confidence', a great act of ritual faith that downplays actual instructional procedures, teaching methods and educational outcomes because these are hard to measure, difficult to control and dangerous if their inconsistencies and failings are exposed. The logic of confidence is protected by decentralisation, segmentation of teachers in isolated classrooms, 'loose coupling' (March and Olsen, 1976) of organisational control and evaluation of technical activity, the move away from formal evaluation of outcome (such as H.S.C.) and the myth of teacher professionalism. Controls on who can be classified as a teacher are tight, but there are few on what teachers really do. There are clear rules on how pupils are classified but not on what they actually learn or how they are treated. It is more important that they have **been** in Grade 5 before Grade 6 than to ensure that what they learned prepared them for the next level. They are tested and graded constantly, but these performance rituals are rarely aggregated to judge teachers or schools as organisations. In short, Meyer and Rowan argue 'schools produce education for **society**, not for individuals or families' and its categories 'define personnel—both citizen and elite—for the modern state and economy'.

This view needs careful examination in the Australian context. The job market may rest less upon individual competences (marketable capacities) than we think, so stress on a simple view of the **content** of what is learned may be misleading. An admission by the Victorian Employers' Federation (*Herald*, 4 September, 1976) that they prefer high school students to technical school graduates, despite the latter's 'vocational' training, because the former are more 'literate', indicates the more subtle side of content, of cultural capital. The same report reveals that it pays to come from 'the right side of the tracks', employment officers having worked out that those from the eastern outer suburbs, or migrants from Windsor-Prahran will be 'safer bets' for employers, especially banks. This in itself is no surprise; it is just that we rarely hear the system operating so blatantly.

But it would be wrong to assume that content as such is unimportant simply because credentialling predominates or because there is scant evaluation of school outcomes. What we should be scrutinising is the articulation of system demands with particular forms of competence, and the way political forms of competence (especially forms of group action and decision-making) are defined out of existence for the majority. All the rhetoric about individual competence, community participation, equal opportunity, etc., will remain pointless until we start to develop group capacities to act. But so will the rhetoric about revolution if we fail to define how the system works. So I come down not on the side of 'work inside the system . . . reform . . . personal liberation', but on the side of finding the chinks in system structure, guerilla warfare and group emancipation. Hence my call (Edgar, 1976a) for a 'new morality', a 'new individualism' based on a totally different social structure.

FOOTNOTE

1. 'Proposal and Evaluation Guidelines'. Victorian Country Education Project, P.O. Box 884, Shepparton, Victoria.

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Source: D. Edgar, 'Reply to Abbey and Ashenden's "Explaining Inequality"', *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1978, pp. 14-18.

4

Education: back to the drawing board

David Bennett

'The great mass of the people want education for their children', said Richard Cobden in 1847, 'They are sick to death of the obstacles you throw in their way' (Simon, 1960, p 341). A strong faith in the value of education was central to early radicalism and to the thinking of the pioneers of the working-class movement. To the Chartists education provided the means by which working people could 'improve' themselves through personal enrichment and the acquisition of liberal culture and thus overcome the barriers of privilege which barred their way to a full life. Through education the working class *as a whole* could gain a greater degree of social equality. Some believed also that 'their hard-won and erratic education' had helped them to build out of their own experience a political understanding of the organisation of society. In other words, it had contributed to the development of their class consciousness (Thompson, 1968). Thus education could become a vital weapon in the struggle for socialism (Entwistle, 1978).

There is another, very different view, which also has a long history. 'We believe', said a member of the London Trades Council in 1887, speaking as 'a representative of the working classes', that 'the children of the poor ought to be able to rise from the elementary to the secondary schools and on to the universities . . . All educational facilities ought to be equal and open to all classes' (Simon, 1960, p 366). Here education, or rather schooling, appears as the ladder which individuals may use to climb out of the working class and so attain the heights of privilege.

By the end of the nineteenth century, if not before, these two approaches to education had become especially important in radical and working-class thought. They have always been in deep contradiction: on the one hand, the belief—surely basic to socialism—that 'the group as a whole had to be improved rather than simply the individual himself'—a belief that education was at least one principal path to social equality, that is, to *equality between classes* (Hobsbawm, 1975); on the other hand, the belief that education could provide *equal opportunity*, an equal—ie fair—chance for the less privileged to join the middle class or even the ruling elite.

In the first half of the twentieth century the former belief was expressed primarily in a demand for secondary education for all, the latter in support for a system of selective schools to provide opportunities for bright working-class children, usually boys. Of course neither of these proposals is in itself particularly socialist or radical. Capitalist spokesmen have long emphasised that public education is necessary to provide a skilled working class and some, like Joseph Chamberlain, saw education as 'an insurance which property must pay in order to exist' (Simon, 1960, p 363). Mass secondary education was introduced in Britain by a Tory politician. Similarly, the provision of a perceptible but controlled degree of upward social mobility has obvious value for the groups which rule society. And some early socialists and anarchists were well aware of the danger that a ruling class interested only in producing 'perfected instruments of labour to make their industrial enterprises . . . profitable' could use public education for 'the perpetuation of the people's slavery' (Spring, 1975, p 22; Simon, 1960, pp 267-8).

What of the Australian Labor movement? Although it was an inheritor of these traditions, the available evidence suggests that at least in the first half of the twentieth century it lacked interest in education. Educational reform in Australia has usually been carried out by officials, often returned freshly primed with new ideas from a trip to Britain or the United States. In the nineteenth century these administrators were occasionally assisted by liberal businessmen, in more recent years by academics or experts in educational research. Sometimes Labor governments were in power when the reforms were carried out, sometimes not. In general, State Labor governments appear to have regarded the large centralised school systems over which they presided as simply a matter for routine administration. This remarkable indifference towards education was still evident as late as the 1950s. Significantly, most of the exceptions involved support for technical education, which was seen as more appropriate to the needs of the working class (Bessant & Spaull, 1976; Fitzgerald, 1975, esp ch 2).

Two obvious facts present themselves as an explanation for the low priority which the Australian Labor Party accorded to education before the 1960s. First, the Australian movement, unlike the British, lacked any significant participation by middle-class intellectuals. Until quite recently its leaders came almost entirely from working-class backgrounds. In the post-war Parliament of 1946 only 40 per cent of Labor members had more than a primary school education, and only one member of Chifley's Cabinet was a graduate. Such men often believed deeply in the value of practical experience. Frequently self-educated, they felt that they had achieved their position despite rather than because of the institutions of the education system. Not uncommonly they harboured a deep suspicion of formal education, and, like a Labor Minister of Education in Queensland, believed that 'the best education is obtained after leaving school' (Fitzgerald, 1975, p 86). 'I hate to think', said Clyde Cameron, 'what I'd have been like if I'd been deprived of a shearing shed education and been given a university education in its place. I'd have been pretty useless; I'd be like all the others' (Cross, 1975, p 41). In the 1960s the Federal Leader, Arthur Calwell, could still use the word 'intellectual' as a term of abuse. Yet Ben Chifley would 'rather have had Mr Menzies' education than a million pounds' and the Government he led was the first to give help to young people wishing to attend universities (Crisp, 1961, p 16).

The second, and probably more important, reason for the Labor Party's apparent indifference to education was the fact that a very large proportion of its membership and electoral support, and more than half its leadership, were Catholics and in general these people had no direct personal interest in the schools for which governments were responsible. No doubt Labor governments administered these 'free, secular and compulsory' schools in conscientious fashion, but the schools which they themselves had attended, and to which they sent their children, were usually fee-paying, religious and voluntary (the same of course was even more true of their conservative opponents). It is hardly surprising that the motivation and energy for reform were usually lacking.

Yet if the strength of the Catholic element in the Party retarded the forces for progress in public education it was, ironically, also responsible for the Party's traditional opposition to aid to private schools, at both State and federal levels. Scullin, 'a strong believer in religious education', feared that the issue 'would entirely disrupt the Labour Movement'. Among many other Catholics in the Party two other Federal Leaders, Chifley and Calwell, shared this view (Crisp, 1961, pp 16, 195; Fitzgerald, 1975, pp 83, 145). Until the 1960s the Catholic campaign for state aid was disunited and largely unsuccessful.

Time of Hope

The immediate stimulus of the education policy which Labor at last acquired in 1969 was the urgent need for a policy on the funding of schools, in particular Catholic schools. But in a deeper and more general sense it was a response to the great social changes of the 1950s and 1960s. This was a period of growing prosperity—a prosperity in which an increasing proportion of the population shared—and a period of growing faith in the future. The prophecies of future benefits from apparently perpetual economic growth and the seductive promises of the new consumerism, helped to expand many people's perceptions of their own social and economic future and more particularly of what could be achieved by their children. The possibilities of upward social mobility seemed greatly increased and the means whereby this elevation to a higher social status would occur—the engine for achieving social success—was education. At the same time improvements in the standard of living enabled many more families to allow their children to remain at school.

This sudden upsurge of social expectations was nowhere more pronounced than in Australia. Between 1956 and 1968 the proportion of fifteen-year-olds at school rose from 46 per cent to 78 per cent, of sixteen-year-olds from 22 per cent to 48 per cent and of seventeen-year-olds from 8 per cent to 25 per cent. The rates of increase for girls were similar to those for boys (Fitzgerald, 1970, ch 1). The electoral outcome of this explosion of expectations was an overwhelming demand, not merely for increased educational facilities, but for an assurance that everything was being done to give every student the maximum possible chance of individual success. And of course this demand did not come only from those who wished their children to achieve the status they themselves had lacked; it came also from those who already possessed some degree of privilege and wished to be assured that they—that is, their children—would not lose it.

I suggested earlier that we find in both the philosophy and practice of democratic socialism two central but conflicting concepts of the significance of education: on the one hand, the concept of the 'improvement' or elevation of the entire working class, leading to greater equality between classes; on the other, the provision of opportunities for bright individuals to rise out of the working class. At some point in the post-war period the second of these concepts became dominant, or perhaps one should say that the first was transformed into the second. At this point the Labor movement in Australia, Britain and elsewhere became committed to the meritocratic version of the concept of 'equality of educational opportunity'. Socialist hopes for the removal or reduction of class barriers were transformed into individual aspirations for promotion to a higher class, socialist plans for a more equal society into the demand for an equal chance for individuals, irrespective of their social background, to achieve greater income, social status and power within an unequal society. Perhaps somewhere within this 'businessman's or bourgeois concept' of equality (Hobsbawm, 1975) was buried the confused idea that if only the barriers preventing less privileged children from reaching higher education could be dismantled, the educational system would exercise its natural egalitarian effect. Certainly a generation of liberals and democratic socialists, motivated by a deep concern to reduce social inequalities, laboured sincerely to prove that these barriers existed and to achieve their removal.

In 1958 Michael Young coined the term 'meritocracy' to satirise the ideal of a society in which those with the greatest amount of 'IQ plus effort' would fill all the positions of power (Young, 1958). The policy of equality of opportunity aims to achieve the conditions required to establish a meritocracy. Its adoption by the Labor movement in a number of countries signalled a conjunction between the ideologies of democratic socialism and liberal capitalism and an apparent acceptance by the former of the mythology of the latter. The socially just society became one in which talent, effort and enterprise should, and in theory do, receive the greatest rewards. Awkward egalitarian utopias were converted into a paradise of fair and open competition—but unfortunately a competition which an increasing proportion of competitors expected to win.

The elements of the required policy were simple: the abolition of class-based or class-biased methods of selection, the expansion of tertiary education and the removal of financial disabilities by the abolition of fees and the provision of generous allowances. The instruments of the policy were humane centralised planning and the distribution of massive funds. The availability of the latter was guaranteed first by the current prosperity and secondly by the fact that representatives of capital and advocates of technological progress and economic growth had begun to vie with socialists and liberals to assert the virtues of education.

This doctrine of equality of opportunity had enormous implications for education itself. First, it assumed that the purpose of the education system was simply personal advancement in material terms. Above all, it endorsed the principle that education, like society itself, is a competition, a process which produces winners and losers. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the rules of this competition are fair—that is, that everyone has an equal chance.

The mid-1960s represented the high point of faith in education and the expectations of that period now seem hopelessly unreal, even ludicrous. Education was expected to establish an equal society, maintain economic growth and promote national prosperity, while at the same time providing everyone with higher incomes, interesting jobs and a pleasant middle-class life.

The Genesis of a Policy

In Australia the immediate effect of the explosion of expectations was a financial crisis for both state and Catholic systems, but more especially the latter. Higher birth-rates and post-war immigration played their part, but the main factor was the acceleration of retention rates at all secondary levels. Costs per student were of course much greater at the higher levels. Education soon became the crucial factor in State budgets and State politicians reluctantly began to add their voices to the long-standing demands of state school teachers and parents for federal aid.

If the situation was difficult for the States it soon became a life and death matter for the Catholic systems. For eighty years the Church had succeeded in maintaining an alternative primary schooling—at very low fees—for nearly all its members. It had no hope of providing in addition from its own resources a similar system of mass secondary education and its problems were exacerbated by a decline in the number of religious teachers.

By this time the Labor Party split of 1955 had produced the Democratic Labor Party and had thus created for the first time a political party which represented a large proportion of Catholic voters and which was explicitly committed to state aid. In addition, the wealthy Protestant schools had finally decided that the temptations of Mammon were stronger than either social principle or anti-Catholic prejudice. In 1963 the mounting demand for state aid finally precipitated the Labor Party into that divisive controversy which its leaders had so long feared. In the midst of the turmoil Prime Minister Menzies abandoned the Liberal Party's traditional indifference towards schools in general and Catholic schools in particular in order to cement an electoral alliance with the DLP. This alliance continued to keep Labor from office for a further nine years.

I have no space to retell the story of the devastating effects which the state aid issue had on the unity and electoral fortunes of the Party, at both federal and State levels, in the period 1963-70 (see eg Freudenberg, 1977; Oakes, 1973). Nor can I do more than draw attention to some of the crucial features of the controversy. First, it was and remains an issue of conscience for many people on *both* sides of the argument. Secondly, though many supporters of government schools were deeply influenced by sympathy for the plight of children in overcrowded Catholic schools—or simply recognised that state aid had become a political fact of life—they remained deeply apprehensive of the possibility that support for private schools would be provided at the expense of state schools, which in their view should always be given priority. Finally, we should note the extent to which the cynical policy of conservative governments prolonged opposition to state aid. Behind all the tumult and shouting lay an important piece of social and political reality: nearly one-fifth of all Australian children attended Catholic schools, and most of their parents, like other parents, were prepared to use their vote to obtain reasonable standards of education.

From the Labor point of view three essential conditions were required for a solution to the state aid controversy. First, the solution would have to satisfy a majority among Party members and electoral supporters on *both* sides of the conflict. On the non-government side this meant that it must be seen to be of 'real assistance to a significant number of Catholic parents'. Both state and Catholic schools would have to be helped to achieve standards which their clients would regard as adequate. Thus, although state school standards were much superior to Catholic, those standards also would have to be substantially improved. Secondly, the aid 'should be provided on the basis of educational and social priorities'—that is, it 'should concentrate—and be seen to concentrate—on helping to meet the greatest existing needs'. This would involve giving the most aid to 'poverty-stricken Catholic parish schools' and 'the minimum of aid to economically privileged individuals and groups'. The third condition was that the policy 'should (as far as possible) *not* undermine, or appear to undermine, the prestige or status of the state schools'—in other words, adequate assurances must be provided to the supporters of those schools. These were the conditions finally incorporated in the federal policy of the ALP and in the Report of the Interim Committee of the Schools Commission.*

Gough Whitlam, who in 1965 began a campaign to persuade the Party to change its policy on state aid, was the architect of the policy. It depended for its success on the financial strength of the Commonwealth to supply the massive funds needed and thus effectively override any objections based on State rights. In 1969, after many vicissitudes, Whitlam obtained agreement to the policy at the Party's Federal Conference. In 1970 the last attempt within the Party to oppose the state aid policy brought about the reconstruction of the Victorian Branch and this, together with the Catholic support gained by means of that policy, made possible federal victory in 1972 (Freudenberg, ch 11 and pp 236-7; Oakes, 1973, ch 12; Fitzgerald, 1975, pp 209, 227).

The formulation of the policy that Whitlam submitted to Federal Conference did not meet the third condition mentioned above—that is, it did not provide adequate assurances to the supporters of state schools. These were added by an amendment specifying a 'primary obligation' to 'maintain government school systems of the highest standard' and the need to have regard to 'the numbers of students enrolled in the various schools'. The significance of these provisions has been a matter for controversy ever since. Was the 'primary obligation' intended to override other 'needs and priorities'? Was 'the highest standard' of government schools meant to be superior to the 'acceptable standards' to which all schools were to be brought? How much weight was to be given to the much larger numbers in government schools? Ultimately the Interim Committee—and the Whitlam Government—accepted the principle that all schools should be brought to *the same standards*—a decision of great significance for the future. Moreover, poorer Catholic schools received much more federal money per student than government schools. However, in the atmosphere of general appreciation for the massive contribution to government schools, there were few protests.

In the 1969 policy equality of opportunity appeared to mean no more than equal facilities for all schools. However, as early as 1956 attempts had begun in America to provide special educational 'stimlation' to children from poor home backgrounds with the intention of 'compensating' for the 'cultural deprivation' from which such children were alleged to suffer. By 1965 programs of this type were receiving massive funding as part of President Johnson's campaign for the 'Great Society'. The archetypal compensatory program was

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*The quotations are taken from a document circulated to the Federal Conference of the Party in March 1966 (Bennett & Mathews, 1966). It set out these conditions and the functions of a 'Commonwealth Schools (Grants?) Commission'. I do not know what part it played in the development of the policy.

Operation Headstart, which included *Sesame Street*; it was designed to provide special education for black urban children before they enrolled at school. The assumption behind these programs was that if the 'educational disadvantage' due to socio-economic causes could be compensated for, opportunities would be equalised. They thus constituted an early version of the principle of 'positive discrimination' and represented a radical extension of the concept of equality of opportunity.

Soon afterwards the same principle was endorsed in the influential British Plowden Report. Standards in schools in certain 'educational priority areas' were to be raised until they were above the national average. By this time these ideas were receiving support in Australia (Mathews, 1967; ALP, 1967), and in 1968 Whitlam returned from Britain enthused by discussions on the Plowden Report. However, official statements continued to emphasise equality of provision.

Attack on Tradition

Other developments in the 1960s, although they did not influence the official policy with which Labor entered the 1972 election, did affect the policy of the Schools Commission. The same social pressures which brought unprecedented demands for funds accentuated the inadequacies and absurdities of traditional secondary schooling. The already outdated academic curriculum now became even less appropriate to the increasingly heterogeneous student body, many of whom found the material difficult, uninteresting or meaningless. But attempts to divert large proportions of students into 'non-academic' or 'commercial' or 'practical' streams caused serious problems, whether this was done by examinations, 'ability' or 'aptitude' tests or by persuading students to choose 'less demanding' options. Most of these students were after all staying longer at school precisely in order to succeed in the basic competition for entry to tertiary education and diversion from academic streams effectively excluded them from this competition (Schools Commission, 1977). The unrelenting and often unrealistic expectations of parents, employers and self-appointed academic guardians of 'standards of excellence' all tended to increase pressures on students and make competition fiercer. Disciplinary problems mounted and the atmosphere in many secondary schools became increasingly oppressive. On the whole schools were left to cope as best they could with these growing pressures.

Meanwhile other basic social changes were undermining the stability of cultural values on which the schools depended. Both their purpose and the codes of behaviour they were expected to enforce had become uncertain. They were being asked to undertake a whole new range of tasks: 'The formal purposes of education . . . are now so diverse and diffuse that they amount to nothing less than *total personality development*' (Pusey, 1979). Should the curriculum give priority to the traditional disciplines or should it develop integrated studies more 'relevant' to students? Should it include current affairs, human relations, sex education, drug education, environmental education, driver education . . .? At the same time the demands of the economic system had become less clear and less specific.

People now also increasingly disagreed or vacillated about how children should be brought up, about the use of authority, and children's rights. These doubts and discords of course reflected deeper uncertainties concerning individual freedom, personal fulfilment and the good society. Not everyone was happy to engage in a single-minded struggle for social success and for the material benefits so enticingly offered. There was an increasing awareness not only of the gap between expectations and actual experience but of the hard realities of the new economic and social landscape—the constant instability and dislocation caused by technological development, the disintegration of supportive communities, the isolation and loneliness of the outer suburbs and the sense of subjection to impersonal, remote and ever-expanding organisations. For many the very changes which seemed to have made possible a richer and more independent personal life seemed also to prevent their realisation. Unfulfilled expectations led easily to a greater consciousness of alienation. The obverse side to the drive for success was a fear of failure. How much were the promises of the new meritocracy worth? For those children who were 'bright', would hard work really guarantee success? Serious conflicts began to emerge between proponents of rival educational philosophies. More often, however, such questions represented a deep ambivalence afflicting individual members of that varied and ever-expanding species, the Australian middle class.

As part of a growing desire to participate in decisions about their own lives, many parents became less inclined to take for granted the judgments of teachers and principals, while the great centralised bureaucracies which administered state schools seemed inefficient and unresponsive. Intervention at all levels from classroom to Cabinet became common. Parent organisations also began to change: women whose traditional role had been to prepare lunches in school canteens became active members of well-organised and politically effective interest groups. Thus new questions were raised: should parents be free to enter schools? Should they participate in controlling those schools? The traditional barriers between schools and the rest of society had begun to dissolve. The embattled bureaucracies were thrust into a state of crisis from which they show no sign of emerging. Once the social consensus on which these systems depend has disintegrated, 'their bureaucratic uniformities are seen and felt to be artificial, contrived and ultimately arbitrary; they lack genuinely moral and imperative force ie legitimacy' (Pusey, 1979, p 233).

The new wave of progressivism first became apparent in America, where the social and educational developments I have described had reached the most advanced stage. The writings of A S Neill suddenly became popular and private middle-class 'free schools' modelled on

Summerhill began to spring up all over the nation. In Australia similar schools began to be established about 1970. Many of these ventures represented valiant attempts by small groups and individuals, usually working against great odds, to solve the problems affecting contemporary schools and to create more humane and democratic institutions. Like Summerhill itself, these schools frequently displayed an element of romantic escapism, a tendency to isolate themselves from society, but they often differed from the original model: for example, parents and teachers as well as students began to participate in their control. In America some urban black communities also established 'community schools' as a political protest against what they regarded as a repressive public-school system, but only occasionally did the two strands of educational progressivism and political radicalism come together (Kozol, 1967, 1972).

In the late 1960s, a series of books written by practising American teachers—Holt, Dennison, Kohl, Herndon and others—expressed outrage at the inhuman and authoritarian nature of the institutions in which they had worked. These books were widely read in Australia, and met a positive response from many who agreed that schools were often 'grim, joyless places . . . intellectually sterile and aesthetically barren institutions' which destroyed spontaneity, joy in learning and self-confidence, which were governed in an 'oppressive and petty way', and in which principals and teachers often displayed unconscious contempt for students (Silberman, 1970). The progressives advocated the development of student autonomy and respect for students as persons, opportunities for the exercise of choice within a much wider and more appropriate curriculum, the substitution of co-operation for competition and the end of repressive forms of assessment and selection, the removal of unnecessary rules and oppressive hierarchical structures and the introduction of student participation in democratic forms of control.

In Victoria the progressives gained unexpected support from a senior member of the bureaucracy. R A Reed, who was appointed Chief Inspector in Secondary Schools in 1965, succeeded, with strong support from the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association, in revolutionising secondary education in that State. In 1966 he deliberately subverted the power of his own unsympathetic board of inspectors by openly encouraging all schools to develop their own curricula and structures, thus beginning a significant national trend towards devolution of responsibility (Reed, 1975; Victorian Education Department, 1970). Individual schools began to develop in a variety of directions and to an unusual degree progressive ideas were applied in ordinary public schools. There were also a few genuinely radical attempts to establish 'community schools' which reflected a concern for social equality and which in 1982 still provide important models for Australian education. The principle of devolution was also officially endorsed in South Australia, first in 1970 by the Director-General, A W Jones, and then in 1971 by the Labor-appointed

Committee of Enquiry chaired by Peter Karmel. This Committee also endorsed 'a non-authoritarian approach, . . . a diversity of educational institutions . . . and the opening up of the educational system to new ideas' (Committee of Enquiry, 1971, p 2).

Some people now believe that pressures of economic change and political conservatism have made the issues raised by the progressives out of date. This is an illusion. Because they are a reflection of fundamental social conflicts they will not go away. 'The educational system . . . has become the laboratory in which competing solutions to the problems of personal liberation and social equality are tested and the arena in which social struggles are fought out' (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p 5). Nor can these problems be solved by schools or school systems in their traditional form for they are above all political questions.

The Schools Commission

As soon as the Labor Government was elected in December 1972 Whitlam took steps to form the Interim Committee of the Schools Commission. The chairman was again Peter Karmel. Six out of the ten members came from the more educationally progressive States, South Australia and Victoria. Within a few weeks the Committee held its first meeting and by May 1973 it had presented its report. The Government soon accepted almost all the recommendations of the Committee. It was not until January 1974, however, following a bitter fight in the Senate which ended when the Country Party finally deserted the Liberals and the DLP to support a slightly amended bill, that the Schools Commission was finally formed.

The principal recommendations of the Karmel Report, as it came to be known, and thus the education policy of the Whitlam Government can now be briefly summarised. First, the Committee recommended a solution to the state aid conflict which met the conditions outlined above. Large financial contributions would significantly raise recurrent resource levels in both state and Catholic schools so that by 1979 they both would have reached the same 'target' levels. This would involve an improvement of 35-40 per cent for state schools and on average about 80 per cent for Catholic schools. In addition there were large grants for building and for in-service training for both systems, and additional grants to state systems to improve standards in special schools. Aid to the wealthier private schools was to be phased out (the Government actually decided to terminate all aid to these schools forthwith but was forced to compromise on this issue in the Senate). Thus the main aims of Labor policy were put into practice. In addition, a program of positive discrimination was established in favour of 'disadvantaged schools' (Schools Commission, 1973).

Thus far the Committee could be seen as expressing the views of the Labor Party, but its report endorsed additional policies which owed virtually nothing either to the decisions or to the expressed philosophy of the Party. These policies were derived from the progressive revolt against traditional schooling and from the more general attack on centralised bureaucracy. They included support for devolution of responsibility to 'the grass roots'; a somewhat vague commitment to 'diversity' in education; an assertion of the need for innovation and 'experimentation'; endorsement of the principle that 'the community' should be 'involved' in schools and should participate in governing them; and support for the concept of 'recurrent' or 'lifelong' education:

> Every member of the society has an entitlement to a period of education at public expense, and those who leave school early have a claim which they should be able to take out at a later date (Schools Commission, 1973).

Whether the Labor Party was in favour of these principles or not, they have all since been incorporated, to a greater or lesser extent, in its National Platform. However, one may question whether their full implications at both federal and State levels are fully understood by the membership.

In subsequent years the Schools Commission gave further emphasis to these aspects of the original report. They proclaimed their intention of 'opening up the school', of exploring new structures, expanding the curriculum, increasing participation by teachers, parents and students, and developing 'new relationships between the school and the community, and between formal education and the rest of life' (Schools Commission, 1975, p 104). In particular they tried to persuade State authorities to give schools more control over their finances and supported the movement towards parent representation on school councils.

The Disadvantaged Schools Program in hundreds of schools brought together for the first time all the teachers in the school, and often members of the community as well, to seriously consider what their schools should really try to do and how they might be improved. The Innovations Program had by 1981 made some 4400 grants for innovative projects to teachers, schools and members of the community. The program marshalled the energies and enthusiasm of people anxious to help improve their schools and it gave support and legitimation to many progressive and some radical attempts to change the system. There is clear evidence that it succeeded in developing the individual and collective capacities of many people working in and for schools (Malcolm & Owen, 1982). In addition the Commission established thirty-four education centres, each conducted by an independent committee consisting of teachers and members of the community, and managed to persuade most States to share control of Development Program funds with teachers and parents. The emphasis on devolution was understandable but ironic: while it was perhaps natural for the Commonwealth to help undermine the central power of the State authorities, the Whitlam Government itself was more centralist in philosophy than any other in our history.

The Interim Committee in effect produced two different definitions of equality of opportunity: first, equal facilities (equal resources for all schools) and secondly, 'equal outcomes'—ie equal chances for all social groups. The Commission later gave more emphasis to the second definition and applied it not only to students subject to general 'socio-economic disadvantage' but also to specific groups suffering from prejudice or oppression. For example, it provided for the first time an opportunity for a representative group of Aborigines to seriously consider the question of their people's education and it created an initial focus and gave considerable practical support to the nascent campaign against sexist practices in education.

The Best Laid Plans

I believe that the establishment of the Schools Commission itself, and many of its specific initiatives, have had beneficial effects on Australian education. But did it achieve the objectives of Labor's schools policy of 1969? Certainly all schools, and more especially Catholic schools, benefited from a great increase in resources and experienced a big lift in morale. When the Whitlam Government left office it indeed seemed that education had been its greatest success. But in fact the policy failed because it was based on a fundamental misconception—that the Commonwealth could be the sole or at any rate the principal source of funds for school education and that therefore it could determine and maintain national resource standards. In fact this has not happened and is not likely to happen in the foreseeable future. The reason is, simply, the federal system.

The funds from the Schools Commission had scarcely begun to flow to State governments when the latter began to demonstrate their willingness, and their ability, to continue to increase their own financial contributions to standards in schools. It is true that in the early years of the Commission, by a singular irony, the Whitlam Government, through the arrangements it adopted for assuming the States' responsibility for tertiary education, made it easier for them to increase their contributions to schools. However, this and other temporary factors merely helped to exaggerate a normal trend. The States had been increasing their expenditure on education in real terms for very many years—at least since 1945—and they simply went on doing so. The financial stringencies of recent years have slowed the rate of increase, but even they have not prevented the continual upward movement: in the four financial years to 1979-80 the States increased their recurrent expenditure on state schools in real terms by 23.3 per cent. Nor have the recent decreases in school enrolments persuaded the States to call a halt; rather they have had the effect of further increasing expenditure per student. (For the period prior to 1973, see Fitzgerald, 1967; 1970, ch 2; 1975, pp 100-8, 194-9; Schools Commission, 1973, paras 4.30-4.31. For the period after 1973 see Schools Commission, 1980, table 6.12; 1981, tables 10.4-10.5.)

Why do the States keep on increasing their contributions? The most likely reasons are the most obvious: school education is politically important and not becoming less important; and as State governments are immediately responsible for state schools, this political pressure falls most heavily on them. The endless rise in funds for education simply provides another index of the relentless escalation in social aspirations. Despite the fact that Commonwealth contributions to the States first ceased to increase and then began to slightly decrease, the States through their own efforts ensured that their schools reached and in most cases easily surpassed the Karmel targets well ahead of time (Schools Commission, 1981, table 10.6). In such a situation it would of course be ludicrous for any Commonwealth government to claim to be determining or maintaining standards in state schools. Nor can the Commonwealth hope to act as a guardian of standards in the sense of ensuring that individual States do not lag behind generally accepted levels. True, it might give short-term help to particular States to help them 'catch up' but it can hardly continue to penalise those States which contribute more to schools. Or should it penalise the ones lagging behind, thus lowering their standards further? In any case, why should all States be expected to allocate exactly the same priority to schools as compared with, say, health, welfare, child care or some other purpose? The Commission in fact soon abandoned any pretence that it could apply the needs policy to the States.

The immediate result of the misconception underlying the 1969 policy was that, when in 1975 the Commonwealth ceased to increase its contributions to schools, state school standards went on rising and private school standards did not. Thus the standards of the latter, in comparison with the former, began to drop. Despite the fact that the Fraser Government has significantly increased its contributions to private schools and has slightly decreased its contributions to state schools, the standards of Catholic schools have not improved in comparison with state schools; they are now about 70 per cent of state school standards. Thus although by 1981 they had reached a level equal to that of state schools in 1972, *they are now lower in comparison with current state school standards than they were then.* Of course because the Fraser Government continues to increase its contributions to the wealthier schools, many of them operating at standards far above those of government schools, it is a mockery for them to claim 'needs' as a justification for their policy. However, as far as the Catholic schools are concerned, the present Government is simply applying Labor's 'needs policy'—that is, it is making greater contributions to those schools which have lower resource levels.

One must conclude first, that the Commonwealth cannot act either as judge or custodian of national standards; and secondly, that the attempt to solve the state aid problem has failed. Continuing improvements in state school standards will bring continuing pressures at both State and federal levels for additional aid to Catholic schools, but no rational basis exists at either level for calculating the amount of aid now required, let alone any basis for planning how to meet future needs. In this situation there is a strong danger that state aid will once more become—if it is not already—a subject for regular horse-dealing at election time on the most cynical and ad hoc basis. The prospect is not an attractive one, from the Catholic point of view or any other.

In its last report the Schools Commission rather foolishly tried to make the problem disappear by turning the Whitlam policy on its head. It in effect determined a *maximum* resource standard by pretending that it had found a way of 'deciding how much money an authority or school needs' (Schools Commission, 1981, para 4.11), and then recommended that the Commonwealth should not help any school to exceed that standard. At the same time it inconsistently continued to assert that the needs of schools at any particular time are simply 'dependent on the community's view' at that time 'and its expectation of the way [the schools] should operate' (para 4.3), thus admitting that no rational basis exists for determining such a standard. Moreover, the recommendation would if implemented result in Catholic standards remaining stationary while state school standards went on rising. Presumably the real purpose of the Commission's elaborate scheme was to place a limit on the Commonwealth's contributions to private schools, but the result would be to produce precisely the situation that the Commission was created to prevent.

A permanent solution to the state aid problem is sorely needed but one is not at present in sight. Most of the schemes proposed involve the imposition of various conditions on the Catholic systems. Some of these proposals can easily be justified. Even after allowing for the 'contributed services' of religious teachers, the Catholic systems now have approximately two-thirds of their recurrent costs met from public funds, yet they are not required to give even the most modest undertakings in order to obtain these funds. They are free to continue to maintain low fees (or even to reduce them) irrespective of the financial capacity of the school's clientele. They are free to increase the enrolment of particular schools—and thus reduce standards—or to commence new building projects (usually with significant Commonwealth help) and as a result devote an increased proportion of their own limited contributions to meeting the resulting interest charges (Schools Commission, 1981, chs 10, 12). They do not even have to undertake to bring all their schools up to some minimum standard. Nevertheless, proposals to impose conditions on these systems appear to be no more politically practicable than they were in the past. No Australian government has ever threatened to close down a Catholic school or to deny it public support. Who is prepared to do so now? Labor should commit itself in principle to a search for a long-term solution to the state aid question but at present it cannot demand or expect one.

In the pragmatic, short-term sense the solution, though financially unpalatable, is really simple. As in the 1960s, the answer is that sufficient finance must be found to satisfy the supporters of both major systems. On the one hand Catholic parents must be assured that Labor is still committed to maintaining their schools at standards which can be regarded as 'acceptable' in relation to those of state schools. On the other hand Labor must take steps to partially redress the balance of funding between state and private schools which has been upset by the Fraser Government. It must reassure those who rightly see the maintenance of public schools as the 'primary obligation' of any government. Of course Labour should in addition terminate all aid which allows private schools to operate above state school standards.

The role of the Commonwealth in relation to state systems also needs to be carefully examined. Most of the funds provided to the state systems from 1973 onwards simply disappeared without trace into State treasuries. In general the Commission has not been able to control the use of the funds it provides and accountability has been largely a joke. Members of the Whitlam Government were right to complain that the public was largely unaware of the enormous help given to state schools and that the Government did not receive proper credit for these efforts. However, since 1973 the Commission has learnt a great deal, not only about how to deal with the state and Catholic bureaucracies, but also about what kinds of action are likely to really cause worthwhile change in schools. The Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Innovations Program, the Education Centres and the Development Program have all in different ways demonstrated that it is not the amounts of money that matter but *the processes* which are initiated, sustained and developed by the distribution of funds. It is these processes which affect the individuals and groups involved in schools and systems and may modify the structures and procedures within which they work. With the necessary political support, programs like the Government General Recurrent Program could be replaced by a series of programs carefully designed, if possible in co-operation with system authorities, to achieve specific purposes and to operate according to certain principles. In general funds should be controlled, not by any central bureaucracy in Canberra or in a State capital, but by democratic bodies responsible for conducting particular schools or organising local services.

By providing the Commission each year with detailed financial guidelines the Fraser Government has virtually suspended its freedom to undertake new initiatives and it has also in various ways reduced the Commission's capacity. Significantly, however, the Commission is the one important creation of the Whitlam Government which has not been abolished; moreover, contrary to general belief, the present Government has not destroyed or seriously sabotaged any of the specific purpose programs. The Commission itself was responsible for the only seriously destructive action to date: the gradual reduction of the resources available to the Innovations Program, followed by its final elimination in 1981. However, all these actions are easily reversible.

The End of an Ideology?

I have tried to show how the progressivist attack of the 1960s contributed significantly to Schools Commission policies and thus to the present policy of the Labor Party. Although the progressives were bitterly critical of traditional schooling, their criticisms were basically constructive and optimistic; they felt that they knew how to improve schools. However, although in Australia the general atmosphere remained for some years positive, indeed enthusiastic, in other countries there had by 1971 been a dramatic change: faith in education had been replaced by a profound disillusionment. This change was not due to the economic troubles of the 1970s, which had not yet begun, nor to any conservative 'backlash' to progressive ideas, which had nowhere been put into practice on any significant scale. The major attack in fact came not from the right but from the left. Suddenly education was seen as being, not a vehicle for achieving equality and social justice, but precisely the opposite—the means by which inequality was transmitted from one generation to the next.

In retrospect the change can be seen as the progressive exposure of the implications of the new policies of equality of opportunity. It began when the very studies intended to provide the information needed to carry out those policies threw doubt on their basic assumptions. The Coleman Report in America seemed to show that giving more resources to schools did nothing to equalise opportunity. It also reached the shocking conclusion that inequalities increased as children moved through the school system (Coleman et al, 1966). Did schools make no difference at all or did they in fact make things worse? Perhaps the best one could hope for was to make them more pleasant and interesting places. Meanwhile in Britain it seemed that despite all the changes supported by the Labour Party at the secondary level and the massive expansion of tertiary education, opportunity was not becoming more equal. In fact a later British study has shown that the importance of social class in deciding who gets to university has actually *increased* since the Second World War. The principal change is that now the education system plays a more significant role in transmitting social status from one generation to the next (Halsey, 1977). There is every reason to expect that the same would hold for Australia. It follows of course that the great increases in expenditure on tertiary education—including those made by Labor in Australia—have increased social inequality. Poorer families, whose children are still much more likely to drop out of school early, must now make greater contributions from their limited incomes to pay for the very expensive tertiary education of children who come principally from affluent homes. Moreover it is precisely this education which enables the latter to achieve high income and social status.

There is now considerable evidence that schools do in fact help to transmit privilege and disadvantage, power and powerlessness, from one generation to the next. A prime objective of any political party concerned to achieve a more just society must therefore be to understand this phenomenon and to change it. Certainly in recent years there have been numerous attempts by sociologists and philosophers —mostly neo-Marxists and other radicals—to explain how schools 'reproduce' inequality and to analyse their relationship with other social institutions. Do they transmit particular 'status cultures' and thus determine, for example, who will become members of the elite (Collins, 1971)? Do schools have a 'hidden curriculum' which teaches that social success depends upon the amount of learning which each student consumes? According to this view schools have power because they control the stock of knowledge and monopolise certification (Illich, 1971). Do schools exercise their power through control of the curriculum by deciding what is to count as knowledge and who is to receive which types of it (Young, 1971)? Does education depend upon a 'banking' concept in which students passively 'work at storing the deposits of knowledge entrusted to them' and are thus prevented from developing the critical consciousness which would enable them to turn against their oppressors and transform their world (Freire, 1972)? Is the education system simply an agent of the capitalist system—an instrument which 'serves to perpetuate the social relationships of economic life . . . by facilitating the smooth integration of youth into the labour force'? Bowles and Gintis (1976, p 11) believe that schools foster certain 'types of personal development' which prepare students for roles of 'dominance' or 'subordinacy' in the hierarchy of occupations. Such explanations are supported by a new picture of the history of public education which claims that, as the early socialists feared, its real purpose has always been to prepare children for work in the factories: 'The character of education was shaped after the image of industrial production' (Cohen & Lazerson, 1972).

These theories have certainly helped us in different ways to develop our understanding of schools and their functions. But for me they have failed to relate their explanations to the ways in which schools actually operate. We do know something of the actual mechanisms by which inequality is transmitted. Schools—and policy makers in all parties—have been far too ready to employ such concepts as 'cultural deprivation' in order to put the responsibility for the child's failure on to the family rather than the school. Middle-class teachers expect working-class children to have limited abilities—indeed they are taught that this is so—and this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. School systems and schools and teachers are all fond of sorting and classifying children and once they are labelled, they are treated differently. Yet when all this is said, we still have not, I believe, reached the core of the problem.

Schools teach two principal things: *competition* and *failure*. First, they teach that society is a competition and that schooling itself is a competition; the latter is simply a preparation for the former. Secondly, they teach that in these competitions most people fail; and as

Neill, Holt and so many other progressive teachers have claimed, they teach people to fail. Even though it is the fear of failure which motivates them—the 'essential nightmare' as Henry (1972) calls it—so also most of them must learn to accept the inevitability of failure. And as most of those who fail are the children of the less privileged and will themselves in turn become the less privileged, 'educational institutions', as Bernstein suggested, 'legitimise social inequality by individualising failure'. If democracy leads to everyone being 'educated' and being taught to expect the benefits of education, only 'a fundamental loss of self-respect' will enable the individual to accept his or her future occupational role and the demands made upon them by society (Bernstein, 1958). Brian Jackson, who helped to expose the gulf between the education system and the working class (Jackson & Marsden, 1962), has spoken of the working man who described his school as 'the place where we were taught that we were stupid', and Michael Duane, a courageous pioneer in the struggle to make public education more humane (Berg, 1968), of the old miner who concluded a similar analysis of the effects of his schooling by asking: 'Why else would we have gone down the pit?'.

It is this system of competition *in both school and society* which is legitimated by that ideology of meritocracy of which equality of opportunity forms an essential part. It is a competition in which few will win and many will fail, and those in power can and do use the concept as a 'justification for their own success and the failure of others' (Proefriedt, 1980). Moreover, it justifies devoting much greater resources to the winners after they have won, than to giving the losers a greater chance of winning: the community spends four and a half times as much per annum on a university student as on a primary school student (Schools Commission, 1981, fig 4.1). As long as some succeed, inequality continues to be acceptable and middle-class teachers of liberal and even radical opinions can feel that their work in public education is a way of helping to improve society (Spring, 1975, p 131). Thus the system helps both to perpetuate and to justify a class society.

Ironically it was the efforts made in the 1960s to create a real 'equality of opportunity' which led inevitably to a questioning of the whole ideology. The basic meritocratic objective was to ensure that 'natural ability' was given the opportunity to rise to the top. But the idea that it is necessary to first 'compensate' for social disadvantage in order to allow ability to emerge implies that group differences in ability as normally measured by the system are not derived from nature at all, but either have been imposed by the society through the medium of the child's social background or are a result of the methods of measurement used by the education system. Once this is admitted, the pursuit of the meritocratic ideal of matching natural ability to individual success becomes logically absurd. It also becomes apparent that there is something slightly lunatic, as well as deeply immoral, about a policy which sets out to remove the effects of social disadvantages, not because this is itself a desirable thing to do, but merely in order to ensure that some particular pre-defined proportion of the group will succeed in gaining promotion to the advantaged class. Surely if we can really find ways of 'compensating' for apparent differences in ability we should provide this assistance to all who can benefit from it, and not discontinue our efforts as soon as we have reached a certain quota of 'successes'. Our aim would be as far as possible to increase the ability of the whole group and to equalise ability across society as a whole. Or would this provide too many successes and not enough failures? Or perhaps leave too few disadvantaged in the next generation? I believe that the main object of education policy, in association with income and welfare policies based on principles of social justice, should be to reduce educational disadvantage due to social factors. *But if this can be achieved, as I believe it can, it should be done, not to ensure that some particular small proportion of poor people become rich, but to produce a more equal society.*

Starting Points

I have tried to show that the original Schools Commission policy has failed to provide a permanent solution to the state aid problem and that it is important to divest ourselves of the illusion that the present unsatisfactory aspects of federal funding arrangements are due simply to the machinations of the Fraser Government. However, I believe that a rational analysis will lead to the conclusion that Labor must on no account allow itself to become diverted into another destructive and futile argument on this issue. To search for a final solution is to pursue a mirage; problems of state aid and the overall distribution of federal funds should be handled on a pragmatic short-term basis. This will have the additional advantage of allowing us to attend to much more important matters.

Labor faces the task of building a new education policy. The old policy of equality of opportunity is empirically and philosophically bankrupt and even the political consensus which supported it has begun to crumble. But the task is a difficult one. A new policy cannot be built in a social vacuum. It must be related to a credible vision of the kind of society we would like to create and education's role in it. Without such a vision the Party cannot merely have no education policy; it can have no future.

In addition this vision must be translated into a set of principles which can be applied in practice to the conduct of schools and school systems. Schools always reflect the basic values and aspirations and assumptions of society and when these are confused and conflicting some choices have to be made. Thus no political party can now 'keep politics out of education' at either State or federal level. In other words, educational decisions can no longer be left to the bureaucrats, and especially not to those management specialists and systems analysts who have become so fashionable. In particular, the Labor Party must now be concerned with what actually goes on in schools, with how children are treated and with basic questions about the purposes of schooling. This will not make schools into political instruments; they have always been that.

The recent analyses by neo-Marxists and 'structuralist' sociologists often picture schools simply as part of some relentless capitalist Juggernaut. These contributions are not only unhelpful, they are counterproductive. They make those who hope for improvement and who are prepared to work for it feel that they are powerless pawns. No party that wants change can allow the existence of conservative institutions to constitute an argument against action. Moreover, the very number and variety of gloomy analyses should give us heart. We should notice that employers complain because schools are not properly preparing students to work in factories—the very thing which most Marxists complain that schools are in fact doing. And if, as some say, schools 'make no difference', how can they be so effective in perpetuating or even increasing inequality? The truth is that education is still potentially one of the most powerful instruments for social change.

The principal task, then, for the coming years is to develop a policy for education which is truly egalitarian. Perhaps we should begin by re-examining some earlier socialist views. If we refuse to simply assume that the present degree of social inequality will be reproduced in the next generation, we may begin to consider whether we really want any overall transfer of power and status from the more privileged to the less privileged class of society and then to look closely at, for example, the present distribution of rewards and desirable jobs within the society.

To create an egalitarian policy we shall be forced to consider the school as a social entity and its relationship with the rest of society. This will require that at last a rapprochement be made between political radicalism and the progressive movement in education. Now that the left has at last realised that its goals cannot be achieved through the use of centralised bureaucracies, it should be possible to end the long destructive conflict between the two forces. It is from the progressive tradition that the Labor movement can learn what a school appropriate to a more egalitarian, humane and democratic society should be like. It is this tradition which has created schools concerned to develop individuals who are able to make free choices and to deal confidently with their own lives—the type of autonomous person necessary for building a free society. It has refused to accept the oppressive, authoritarian and hierarchical structures whicn both duplicate and help to reproduce the worst features of the industrial process and in their place has tried to create democratic structures through which children learn that even the weakest members of a community have equal rights and that all should participate in making decisions. Above all, it has refused to accept that society should be based on competition for individual success, on the sorting and labelling of human beings and on the manufacture of failure and inferiority.

However, the new policies would reject the less attractive features of progressive education: they would replace individualism by an emphasis on collective action, escapism and isolation from the community by full involvement in it and active participation of parents in the school. As some existing alternative schools in public systems demonstrate, this need not be a middle-class model.

An egalitarian policy must also incorporate a clear concept of how the school itself, through its curriculum and its teaching methods, should actively work to produce a more egalitarian society. Today through both the formal and the 'hidden' curriculum students acquire a basically conservative, if not reactionary, social and political ideology. Many teachers are anxious to change this situation but they need guidance and support. Schools should help students 'to confront the socially structured realities of their lives' and work through the dilemmas presented by those realities. 'Knowledge is generated by people reflecting on and sharing experience and taking decisions about how they will conduct their individual lives, as well as being drawn from systematised ways of proceeding' (Blackburn, 1981). For these purposes students need information about work and technological change and sex roles, they need to meet adults who are in situations similar to those which they themselves will face, and they need to be able to relate this to an understanding of how society works. Some recent attempts to attack sexist practices in schools and some current work with young unemployed people may provide models for the development of such a policy.

The principle of positive discrimination should still play a major role in any egalitarian policy. Programs based on this principle have *not* failed; in general they have not yet been seriously attempted. The principle should be disengaged from its association with the concept of equal opportunity, but at least two other ideas should be retained. The first is that in education resources should not be provided equally to individuals, groups or communities but according to need and social priorities. The second is an extension of the general principles that a school must serve its local community, its clients, that there must be a close relationship between the two and that they must work together to develop the education the school will provide. If the community has social characteristics which make the school in its usual institutional form especially inappropriate to the community's needs, then these general principles become much more important and, as the Disadvantaged Schools Program at its best has shown us, may provide perhaps the only productive basis for proceeding.

The final component in ahy policy aimed at equality must be lifelong education. If those who for any reason have not reached a particular educational level in the early part of their lives could really be assured of the right to have a 'second chance', the whole structure of society might change. The possibilities of distributing opportunities across people's lives and for sharing financial rewards and desirable jobs would greatly increase. In Europe the Labor movement has won the first stages of the fight for such rights. Is the Australian Labor movement also prepared to take such ideas seriously?

Many people believe that within the Australian education system the elite private schools are the principal, if not the sole vehicle for passing on privilege from one generation to the next and that therefore the problem can be solved simply by the abolition of these schools. Certainly in this case the mechanism by which existing wealth and status are employed to ensure their transition through the education system is obvious, and its significance undeniable. There are two reasons why I have not laid more emphasis on this issue.

First, the limited terms of the traditional debate concerning the role of these schools tend to obscure the more fundamental social processes involved in the perpetuation of inequality. Secondly, I am unable to suggest how we can overcome the enormous political difficulties involved in removing or even modifying this well-established and extremely powerful element in our society. Nevertheless the task must be faced.

If the main question is how to achieve equality another important question is how schools should be controlled. To answer this question we shall have to consider the distribution of power, the development of new structures and how to apply the principle of participation. Above all, we should be guided by consideration of the kinds of social and educational processes we want to promote. Not only centralised bureaucracy but also hierarchies which exist within schools should be abolished. Means should also be found to bring under control those other institutions and groups which have been quietly acquiring power through their exercise of ideological methods of control—research centres, departments of universities and colleges responsible for the training of teachers, collections of specialists and pseudo-experts (Pusey, 1979). A great deal of power should be devolved to the school level but this power must be exercised within carefully defined limits laid down at higher levels. Representative groups at these levels should be responsible to parliaments for overall allocation of resources and for ensuring that all schools operate according to certain basic principles of equality and social justice. Within these limits the structures and processes which are developed should have a built-in capacity for permanent 'development', 'innovation' and 'renewal', which is simply saying they should provide the maximum opportunity for active participation by all who are prepared to work in or for schools. Finally, we need to make decisions about the role of the Federal government in schools and about ways of ensuring that Labor Party policies at Federal and State levels are consistent.

Finally, we must be wary of again accepting arguments based on values with which we fundamentally disagree. The fact that our captains of industry have now discovered that more education does not make the expected contribution to profits, that in the current economic situation it is difficult for them to identify specific vocational tasks for the education system to perform and that without tight controls the schools may even begin to produce some undesirable types of people—all this provides a good reason for Labor to beware of agreeing that schooling is a waste of time and money. Certainly those members of the Party are right who have come to feel that simply pouring additional resources into education has not achieved and is unlikely to achieve our objectives. Certainly any educational policy aimed at equality and concerned with social change must be carefully integrated with other policies not only in income and welfare but also in such areas as workers' participation and industrial planning. But now that we are starting to learn something about the real functions the education system serves, we can begin to look seriously at the ways in which it might be changed to help produce a better society.

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5

Successful and unsuccessful schools: a study in southern Auckland

Peter Ramsey et al.

ABSTRACT

A central question within the 'new' sociology of knowledge is whether schools act as agencies of transformation or reproduction. Allied to this question is the skeptical claim that schools do not make dramatic differences to children's behaviour, performance, or attitudes in any case. The present ethnographic, grounded theory study, which was located in working class, predominantly Polynesian schools, focusses on these two points and argues that 'successful' schools, through much modified curriculum content, through changed pedagogical techniques and through alternative organisational styles, were endeavouring to effect transformations. However, by contrast, 'unsuccessful' schools were aiming at reproducing existing structures within the community. The researchers argue that their study provides support for some of the major writers in the field, but as well caution that some writers may be overstating their cases (e.g., Anyon, 1981). The researchers are also critical of Rutter and his colleagues' (1979) work primarily because of their failure to treat curriculum content as problematical. They conclude by suggesting that the key questions which face communities like New Zealand remain within the processes elites use to legitimate and to give status to certain forms of knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most critical questions raised by writers in this field now known as the 'new sociology of knowledge' is whether schools act as agencies of reproduction or of transformation. Most writers, especially those working at the theoretical level (see Arnot and Whitty, 1981 for a summary) tend to emphasise the former and argue that schools are designed to maintain the *status quo* and the privileges of power elites. However one researcher, Anyon (1981), has put forward an interesting interpretation of data derived from her research of five socially differentiated schools in Newark. She found that teachers emphasised different forms of knowledge according to the social class of the children they were teaching. Of particular relevance to the present study is the fact that she found that the 'knowledge' presented in the working class schools in her sample was a series of isolated fragmented facts removed from the actual lived experiences of the children. The most frequent classroom experiences were copying and the children were not involved in decision making which remained the prerogative of the teacher. Anyon went further to argue—in line with her earlier research in the same schools on the hidden curriculum (Anyon, 1980)—that the children saw through the facade and rejected many of the normative procedures of the school. Viewed in this way it is possible to suggest that the schools and teachers were unwittingly acting as transformative agencies by developing a potential conflict situation with the power elite, and, in the school context, the children were practising skills of resistance.

The present study—which is part of a much broader investigation which is reported elsewhere (Ramsay *et al.*, 1981)—focusses on the points raised by Anyon in respect of working class schools. It also sheds fresh light on the rather more functionalist research conducted by Rutter and his associates (1979) in the United Kingdom, Owen (1975) in Australia and Wynne (1981) in the United States. These works, which have all of the weaknesses of functionalist research (see Tizard *et al.*, 1980, and Ramsay, 1982 for a discussion), investigated a common question—can schools make a difference? In assessing differential outcomes of schools which had similar structural features these researchers endeavoured to tease out the characteristics which might explain differences in children's performance. All of the researchers came to a common conclusion—there was a remarkable variety of approaches from school to school. This suggests that Anyon's generalisations may need to be subjected to further investigation in other areas, given that her conclusions for working class schools are based on a sampling of two[1].

While the present study is *not* a replication of any of those mentioned (indeed there are major methodological differences—see Ramsay, 1982) it does provide further evidence from another setting which may not only suggest further directions for research in New Zealand, but may also broaden the comparative frame of the evidence produced by the aforementioned researchers.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Procedures and sampling

The methodology adopted for this study was based on 'grounded theory' as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This particular technique was chosen not only because it was apparent that research questions would require qualitative style ethnographic research, but also as it offered a very useful ongoing scheme for categorising and analysing data as it emerged.[2]

In our choice of methodology we were also considerably influenced by the ethnomethodologists. From this perspective we went to considerable lengths to outline our predispositions prior to commencing our research. Before the field work started the four person research team met for several days. Besides discussing our initial phase of data collection, the team considered what they thought they might find out, what they 'knew' about the district and its schools, and the bases of their personal ideologies. While we were not so naive as to believe that we could suspend, or even bracket, our predispositions, and while we were aware that our data would be filtered through what Berger and Luckmann (1967) refer to as the 'inner self', we made a deliberate effort to control an ontological approach. We discovered in this preliminary session that the team had a wide range of backgrounds—for example two were versed in the sociology of knowledge, one member had a background in behavioural psychology and two were employed as visiting teachers. These were the dispositions which, amongst many others, we endeavoured to make explicit. The proceedings of this preliminary session were recorded and together with a written personal statement by each researcher, formed the first part of the 'grounded theory'. Later in the research these predispositions were used by the team during debriefing sessions in an endeavour to assess their effect on the emerging theory. The debriefing sessions were chaired by the research director and consisted of discussion of observations in each school.

We attempted to treat all phenomena as data, and especially alerted ourselves to investigate taken-for-granted assumptions to avoid tunnel vision, and the possibility of a mirror effect (see Ramsay *et al.*, 1981 and Ramsay 1982 for more details).

Our initial field work which involved the collection of some statistics, and preliminary observational data across 30 primary, intermediate and secondary schools in a common geographical region in Southern Auckland, New Zealand, indicated that some schools appeared to be achieving better results than others across a range of variables. In order to assess this proposition further the researchers selected eight schools (4 primary, 2 intermediate, 2 secondary) which were matched in pairs for their proportions of socio-economic status of pupils' parents (in excess of seventy per cent of the sample were in SES groups 5-6 on the Elley and Irving, 1972, scale and were thus mostly in the manual working class sector of New Zealand's occupational force), the ethnic composition of the school (75 per cent of the pupils were of Polynesian extraction) as well as a number of teacher characteristics such as turnover rates[3].

The eight schools were differentiated in terms of their outcomes in pupil performance on a series of standardised tests developed by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research[4] and results in the national School Certificate examination, rates of vandalism as reported to the Auckland Education Board, levels of truancy noted by the schools themselves, and the level of antisocial behaviour and control problems noted by the researchers during the initial observational spell. We termed one group of schools 'successful' and the other group 'unsuccessful'[5].

The schools were observed over a twenty four week period. At regular intervals the researchers were 'debriefed', during which time the data were examined for emerging propositions, which were then subjected to comparative sampling techniques until such time as they were eliminated or were 'theorectically saturated' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Finally, the observational data were assembled into detailed case studies, based on the generalisations about the operations of the schools which had emerged form the debriefing session, but also emphasising the idiosyncracies of each school.

Findings

Two major findings must be emphasised before putting forward our grounded theory. First, the eight schools in our sample were highly idiosyncratic. They differed remarkably in their goals and aims; in their style of operation, in their forms of organisation, and in their decision making procedures. At times we, as researchers, wondered if we would be able to reach any tidy, general conclusions as had Anyon and the other researchers mentioned above. Second, and related to the first, we found a dialectic operating in every school we investigated. For example, we shall argue shortly that one of the characteristics of 'successful' schools was a clearly articulated policy carried into action by staff; however we would note that some staff members cavilled—usually privately—about the wisdom of such policies and in some instances were endeavouring to change them. Moreover in the 'unsuccessful' schools some teachers were trying to operate within frames of organisation and with similar goals to teachers in the so-called 'successful' schools and were actively trying to change procedures in their schools. This is why the terms 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' are placed in inverted commas—our schools were not homogeneous, and a considerable range of practices were found *within* schools as well as *between* schools.

Despite these two major findings, which should be viewed as caveats to the remainder of this article, we were able to isolate eight characteristics which seemed to distinguish the 'successful' from the 'unsuccessful' schools in our sample. These eight characteristics were 1) a clearly articulated philosophy or statement of goals 2) patterns of communication 3) decision making procedures 4) records of pupils progress, 5) the use of community resources and community relationships 6) resource usage 7) improvement of the school environment and 8) provision of a supportive, caring environment.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF 'SUCCESSFUL' SCHOOLS

1. A clearly articulated philosophy or statement of goals

A clearly articulated and well understood philosophy or set of guiding principles had been developed in all four 'successful' schools in our subsample, usually under the guidance of the principle and/or senior staff members.

These schools spelled out their philosophy in a variety of ways, but usually in 'school schemes' or 'staff manuals'. At School DD, for example a comprehensive staff manual was issued to every staff member. This document contained a full account of the schools '. . . basic policy, procedures and philosophy'. (Staff Manual School DD, 3.). It laid down, *inter alia*, detailed aspects of teaching culturally different children, the school's policy on punishment, the goals of the school (academic and social), and administrative details on all aspects of school life. The many appendices contained suggestions for professional reading as well as key articles from a variety of journals.

The manuals and schemes in our 'successful' schools were living documents and were observed in use in both the teachers' preparation of work in staffroom discussions. The documents were seen as base material for the preparation of units of work and were constantly referred to by staff members, not only during formal planning sessions but in informal discussions as well.

For example one of our researchers reported as follows on School A.

> The overall philosophy as set down in the scheme permeated the whole school. It's not just that they use it for formal planning etc. but that they *use* it as a baseline guiding document. At morning tea this morning the S.T.J.C. was in earnest discussion with a young teacher over her reading programme. She outlined some strategies for building word skills, then she pulled out a summary of the scheme. At lunch time the D.P. used it with a small group who were to organise tabloid sports and I also saw two of the younger members of staff looking through the section on behaviour modification and discussion points. It's there all the time . . .

Three of our sample schools had a policy of 'rolling revision' of their scheme, with each section being brought up-to-date on a regular basis. Progress reports were brought forward at staff meetings as well as at sub-committee meetings. Suggestions for professional reading were also made at such meetings.

In contrast the school schemes were seldom seen in use in the four 'less successful' schools. Staff members commented that they had consulted the scheme when first appointed but had seldom looked at it since. As one teacher put it '. . . it's out-of-date and isn't particularly suited for these kids anyhow' (Field notes, School U). Even more cynically one senior teacher remarked '. . . the scheme only gets dusted off when the inspectors are about'. This lack of a clearly outlined and frequently used scheme led to *ad hoc* procedures in the less successful schools and to the development of sub-groups within the staff. We report further on this below.

The contents of the scheme in 'successful' schools were reinforced orally by senior staff, as well as by junior incumbents with newly appointed staff. While this may be interpreted as lessening teacher autonomy and creativity, we found in practice that it did in fact provide a basis for initiative. Indeed, given the opportunity and a basic document, teachers were observed making suggestions for adaptions and changes to the scheme. Far from being limiting we found the basic guide to be a facilitator.

Areas of important content: the scheme in action

Within the philosophy of all four 'successful' schools we found three areas of 'content' which seemed to set them apart from the less successful schools. These related to the areas of teacher expectations, child management patterns and multicultural education.

The main thrust of the philosophy in 'successful' schools was to place the onus on the teaching staff to educate children, with a positive emphasis on achievement and success. Rather than make excuses for failure through labellng processes, the staff were encouraged to create new, innovative strategies. For example, the principle of one of the 'successful' schools commented as follows:

> There is a great danger of underestimating what these children can do, and there is a need for a continuous high input of learning at all levels. There is no excuse for lack of progress except in a very few cases, providing the educational diet has been sufficient . . . this is the only way the cycle of social deprivation can be broken.
>
> (School Principal interview)

Staffroom observations in all four 'successful' schools revealed that problems raised by individual staff members were met typically by suggestions for overcoming the problem. 'Have you tried . . .' was a recurring phrase in our records of both formal and informal staff discussions. This may be contrasted with the less successful school's staffroom behaviour where the response was more often couched in rationalisations based on the children's home background or ethnic group. 'Well, he comes from . . .' was a key phrase in such conversations. The point is well illustrated in the following abridged extract from the field notes in one of the 'successful' schools.

> It is obvious that X has had trouble in getting a good social studies programme going. The leader of his syndicate confided in me early on that X was a bit of a weak link in the chain and that extra help was needed here. On Monday afternoon X came in to the staff room early after school. In a small group he began bemoaning the fact that he just couldn't get some of the Maori kids interested—'were they just dumb?' he queried. The other teachers responded quickly—'they're not dumb at all, you just have to work at getting through to them. Once they accept you they'll work like mad.' Soon after the syndicate leader came in. He had several articles from *Education* and *Social Education* which he gave to X. I heard him say 'You must look positively on these kids. If you expect little that's what you'll get. Give them something they're interesting in doing, capture their interest and you'll fly! Now look, in here there's a good idea that worked with me . . . let's get together tomorrow and discuss it after you've read this stuff'.

In another 'successful' school we found a very similar setting of attitudes with the onus being placed on the teacher staff for success. The following extract from the case studies made this point clear.

> The teachers' needs come after those of the children. There may be need for changes at the beginning of a new year, and the staff are already aware of the possibility of these and accept them. The principal makes the final decision but is amenable to persuasion, but fairly decisive. The rationale is based on *child* needs not on *organisational* needs.

The overriding principle in this particular school was that teachers saw their role as serving the needs of the pupils. Our observational notes were replete with examples of teachers demonstrating their awareness of this principle and the need to reinforce appropriate behaviour as reflected in the following comments and practices:

Teacher 'A' 'We simply have to find out what works with the kids. It is our responsibility. We'd be failing in our duty as teachers if we don't succeed with the children.'

Senior Teacher These children hold the key to the future so the effect must be made. There must be no excuses.'

Teacher 'B' 'Who is buying lunch today? Who is going to have a nice meat pie? Who is having fresh fruit?'

Teacher 'C' 'Fantastic this table again! I like the way this table is working.'

The children were rarely held to blame, and neither were their home backgrounds nor their ethnic origins used as rationalisation for poor performance. Thus the risk of low teacher expectations and subsequent lowered pupil performance was minimised. It became obvious that the teachers accepted a duty to educate, and that there was considerable optimism about what the end product of this education could be. With a view to the future one principal of a successful school noted that:

> The goal is to educate the rest of New Zealand in tolerance and understanding. It must be a gradual process, perhaps 50 to 100 years. It may get worse before it gets better. The hope rests in schools like this—these are the New Zealanders of tomorrow whether we like it or not . . . The type of education provided in an area like this, the philosophies that make a school work in this area are those that will build the New Zealand of the future.

By contrast the less successful schools were typified by this kind of incident

> The D.P. was called away to the telephone. When he returned he said, 'Mrs X again, she claims Jane is being persecuted'. This led to a general discussion of the problems of Pakehas (Jane is a Pakeha—white New Zealander) in a school where the majority groups are Maori. The consensus view seemed to be that the Pakehas were disadvantaged by being placed in such a situation. 'The other kids don't want to learn, I only teach those that want to learn . . .' one of the teachers said, 'and too many couldn't care less. Well if they don't care I'm not going to pressure them into it. I know who will learn and who won't, and I'll concentrate on those who will, those who won't can go their own way.'

The views of the latter teacher were reflected in classroom practice. We reached the conclusion that the level of the teachers' expectations, both academically and socially marked off the 'successful' school from the less successful.

A second aspect noted in the schemes which we saw in practice in the 'successful' schools related to management and discipline programmes. All four 'successful' schools, while providing firm structure, had abandoned corporal punishment and also avoided punitive measures like expulsion and suspension. The emphasis in these schools was on avoiding confrontations, lessening tensions, and making certain that children were given alternatives to the kinds of behaviours deemed to be anti-social. Considerable time was spent on developing guidance programmes and also in providing senior teachers with release time to work with socially disruptive pupils.

In the better schools when antisocial behaviour arose the first response of the teachers was to examine their programme to see if changes would lessen the likelihood of such behaviour. School W provides a good example of this approach, as is demonstrated in the following extracts from the field notes.

> The principal spent some time discussing the school's policy on discipline. He said 'Pupil confrontation is not a great problem here as teachers are instructed to avoid it if possible. Not a great deal of confrontation occurs because of the school programme which we design to keep the children interested.' This policy seems to filter through into the classroom—very few control problems were noted and the teachers were most impressive in diverting and re-directing potential problems. Above all they kept their classrooms interesting and active. Room X is typical. The room has displays in every corner, paintings and large constructions with evidence of pupil and teacher involvement. It is bright and interesting. In my observational periods the teacher kept the children busy and occupied, using reinforcement techniques in a fully graduated way. A wide range of resources including polaroid photographs, charts, booklets, and colouring in cards were used. The S.T.J.C. tells me a lot of the stimulus material was made, acquired or purchased by the teacher herself. I note that she uses cards in reading time with Disney characters which she has cut and pasted herself. During group work the children use teacher prepared booklets which have sentences for copying and completion. The teacher tells me she spends a great deal of time (about 6 hours per week) making this material. She also buys gear herself, but usually gets recompense from the school.
>
> In all my time in this room (and in most of the school) there was no confrontation. This is due in large measure to the frequent change of pace, the use of individualised work sheets, and an imaginative use of a wide range of activities. The principal's point that keeping the programme busy and interesting means a reduction of behaviour problems seems to be reality.

This approach was well summed up by a senior teacher at School S who said:

> I never think of discipline in the classroom but rather of programmes. If these work then all else will.

In the four 'less successful' schools discipline was maintained in a much more overt and aggressive manner, and the programme seemed less interesting for the children. There were significantly many more instances in our field notes of corporal punishment and of teachers having difficulty in controlling classes. In contrast to the 'successful' schools, confrontation with pupils was frequent in the 'less successful' schools. We recorded ten times more instances in 'less successful' than 'successful'. The policy of stamping out problems, and the threat of punishment loomed large in such schools. We came to the conclusion that the behavioural problems arose from programmes which did not interest the pupils, and that punishment patterns had developed to fill the gap.

We also found that the practices and policies just outlined were reflected in pedagogical styles. Teachers in the less successful schools spent much more time on rote learning, on copying work from the blackboard or from books, and on formal lessons. There was also more teacher talk in these schools than in the 'successful' schools. In contrast, the 'successful' schools placed heavy emphasis on the creative abilities of their pupils, and drew work from the basis of their personal experiences*. As we shall report shortly, there was much greater use of community resources and an effort was made to broaden the children's experiential base through outside visits as well as visiting speakers. We observed a wide range of media and techniques being used to encourage vocabulary development, and discussion, and creative writing. These points are developed in detail elsewhere (Ramsay *et al.*, 1981; Ramsay, 1982) and are summarised below.

The third and final aspect of the content of the philosophies of 'successful' schools which we observed in practice was that they also tended to place emphasis on the multicultural nature of their clientele, and to foster—even strengthen—aspects of the ethnic minority cultures. In such schools considerable emphasis was given to the children's individual identity and self esteem. This was particularly apparent in School DD where a policy of ensuring that the type of schooling received was compatible with the cultural backgrounds of the students, was carried into practice. In other 'successful' schools emphasis on Maori clubs, on bringing into the school environment aspects of minority cultures such as Samoan, Niue Islanders, Cook Islanders and so forth was apparent. This emphasis on multicultural education involved quite marked departures from the official syllabuses of instruction which were viewed by many teachers and parents interviewed as not being particularly meaningful for the children concerned. Over 90 per cent of the teachers in such schools supported this policy. We develop this point below.

By contrast, in excess of eighty per cent of the teachers we observed in the less successful schools focused on producing 'New Zealanders'. They down played the ethnicity of pupils—except when excusing poor performance—and emphasised the development of nationhood. Two of these schools expressed reluctance to collect statistics on ethnic lines and a fairly typical view was expressed by a teacher at a 'less successful' school who said she was '. . . sick to death of the increasing emphasis on hyphenated New Zealanders'. A teacher in another school commented in the same tenor when she said, 'I can't stand it when they talk to each other in Samoan (their own language). They're here to learn to speak English.'

Several points regarding the policy in action of multicultural schools must be noted. First, many teachers in these schools (to use Gibson's typology, 1976) were not merely teaching *about* other cultures in a 'museum box' sense (Wilson, 1980), and nor had they merely adjusted the environment to make culturally different children comfortable; rather they were attempting to produce learners who had 'competencies in and ability to operate in two (or more) different cultures' (Gibson, 1976, 13). Some teachers recognised that this was a political act, insofar as the nature of the learners whould be quite different to the majority of learners in New Zealand schools. In short many teachers were raising the consciousness of their pupils in the sense that they were making them aware of the problems of living as a minority group, and of the potential dangers of oppression by power élites (Frieré, 1970).

The goal of the 'successful' schools was essentially transformative. In order to achieve it, where monocultural or bicultural children were being introduced to multiculturalism in a nation where the majority group are monocultural, several steps had been taken. First, most of the teachers had made efforts to become multicultural people. They had acquired an understanding of the norms, attitudes, values and conventions of more than one culture, and had developed a considerable degree of sympathy for cultural difference, as well as the political awareness mentioned above. Second, and obviously related to the first, the teachers were at pains to ensure that they did not offend pupils or parents by misunderstanding behaviours. For example, Pakeha teachers, used to eyeballing people during verbal interaction, knew that some Pacific Islanders viewed this as staring rudely. Third, the forms of knowledge deemed to be important in these schools differed markedly from the official prescriptions as laid down in the school curriculum issued by the central Department of Education. The differences took two forms. The 'successful' schools had gone to some trouble to ascertain what their community wished to emphasise in respect of cultural maintenance. Programmes were adjusted accordingly, using community personnel where necessary; indeed, some parents had become curriculum developers. While the most obvious changes in emphasis were to be found in social studies, they also permeated other curriculum areas. The cultures of the various groups were treated as being alive and changing, and while the treatment was sympathetic the position adopted was never relativistic. Indeed, what we observed was a lively treatment of cultural interaction and process in a contemporary situation in which culture contact was seen as being *reciprocal,* with each group continuously influencing the others. The second difference related to the language patterns of the students. We found that teachers had virtually abandoned the available texts and were translating literature into codes which the children understood. One secondary school had set up its own printing works and was marketing this material in an effort to overcome replication of work from school to school. Fourth, the teachers, in line with the emphasis on success, had adapted their teaching strategies to match some perceived cultural differences. This was very much trial-and-error, but some very interesting small scale experiments were under way (see Ramsay *et al.*, 1981 for elaboration).

The pupils and parents we spoke to were enthusiastic about the changes to curriculum content. They emphasised that they felt the goals were meaningful and would be relevant to them in the future. As one 14 year old put it to us '(the school programme) . . . makes me feel good about myself. It's hard to explain, but I now feel good about being a Maori and I'm more confident than I used to be about it all. Boy, we talk a lot (at school) about problems we face, but well, I reckon I can cope better now'. And a parent said 'I feel comfortable about going up to the school now. It reflects more what I believe, as a Samoan, what is important for Samoans living in New Zealand. We're beginning to get a lot from the school for our kids as Samoans'.

In summary we found that crucial *curriculum* differences, as well as teachers attitudes and expectations, set the 'successful' school apart from the 'unsuccessful'. Whereas the 'successful' schools were endeavouring to present integrated knowledge compatible with the cultural values of their clientele, the 'less successful' schools were presenting knowledge valued more by the dominant white majority, which as a consequence was viewed as being of little relevance by the pupils and was viewed by them as a series of isolated facts somewhat divorced from their domains of reality.

2. Patterns of communication

In all four 'successful' schools clear communication patterns between the various staff members had been established, with duties being delegated on a rational, clearly understood, and accepted basis. Both formal and informal structures were used to convey messages—the latter was used especially when it appeared that a staff member was in need of help or counselling, as for example, in the case of one teacher who was observed 'forcing a child in printing'. The upshot of a senior teacher's observation of this episode was an informal invitation to the teacher concerned to observe another teacher's programme where the emphasis was on demonstrating that learning printing could be pleasurable. This reinforcement of the school's goals through the informal structure appeared to be one of its keys to success. At School W this two level system of communication was encouraged by the principal and senior staff. At the informal level 'self support systems' had been allowed to develop. Thus small groups of staff were observed talking together frequently. The conversation was light-hearted and was permeated with laughter and jokes on a wide range of topics. But, importantly, the conversation centred on classroom programmes and teaching strategies. 'Whinging' and 'moaning' were turned aside and made into jokes. A team spirit and a sense of working together under difficulties was engendered in the informal structure. A 'buddy type' system emerged, and overall there was pressure to participate as a team. This informal support-communication structure was complemented by the formal system. Staff meetings were held regularly and information was exchanged at them. A memorandum system also operated very well—staff members felt they knew what was going on, and were consulted prior to decision making.

The communication patterns described above may be contrasted with School K. During the observation period no full staff meetings were held, and no syndicate (staff group) meetings were reported. A 'news sheet' was typed out daily and copies were delivered to the classrooms before interval and relevant items were read to the class by the teacher. Communications on this were inter-staff as well as staff-pupil, so that in reading them out, teachers had to be careful to select only what was meant for the class. Rather incongruously, however, in most cases, these news sheets were put up on noticeboards *in toto*. Occasionally messages were transmitted orally by the principal or his deputies at morning tea-time, but this was the exception rather than the rule. Teachers on playground duty were not always informed about these messages. In this school it was found that, despite the daily news sheet, much information was not reaching all staff and, moreover, a feeling was abroad that participation in decision making was limited to a senior group of teachers.

Another of our sample schools had greater communication problems. Although staff meetings were held regularly they dealt on relatively minor administrative matters. The principal and senior staff did not pass on information which gave rise to frequent complaints and was a constant source of irritation amongst the classroom teachers. As a consequence the teachers formed several cliques, which acted quite independently of each other and adopted very different policies[7]. Not all staff members belonged to a clique and several expressed to us feelings of isolation and a lack of support. One teacher remarked in this school that on occasions she felt as lonely as a lighthouse keeper!

The researchers reached the conclusion from these contrasting examples that good communication patterns were essential, and that the formal and informal structures of the school must be complementary. In the 'less successful' schools the informal structure was often antagonistic to the formal structure and served to undermine rather than reinforce communication.

3. Decision making procedures

Closely related to the communication patterns and delegation of duties were decision making procedures. In all four 'successful' schools procedures had been developed which were firm yet ostensibly democratic. While the 'successful' schools had principals who were very prepared to make decisions, consultation across a broad spectrum was typical. An attempt was made in such schools to reach decisions by consensus rather than by fiat. It became clear to the researchers that while the principals in the 'successful' schools made the final decision, staff participation went well beyond mere tokenism. As one researcher noted:

> He (the Principal) listens carefully and he explains fully. All staff, especially senior staff, seem to be kept very fully informed. Staff meetings are regular and pretty intensive. Senior staff meet in the Principal's office all lunch time every Friday . . . opinions are exchanged honestly and openly during these meetings.

We found that teachers were prepared to accept (and indeed *expected*) the principal's decision after consultation had occurred. The response of a teacher at School W illustrates this point:

> The principal runs this school in such a way that the staff feels valued and sure. Before a decision is made everyone is consulted. Nobody is

> ever put down or belittled but everyone knows that the principal is in charge.

The principal himself in that school had deliberately developed a low key approach. During an interview he commented that as long as things were going well the three areas of the school were '. . . autonomous within the bounds of the master scheme.' He went on to say 'I keep a low profile within the school. Sometimes I get a surprise by some of the things which happen (e.g., the unexpected arrival of a sports team) but I don't interfere if the organisation is tight and the regulations covered. I keep directions to the staff to an absolute minimum. I believe that if teachers are involved in making decisions then they'll become committed to them'. We observed that a large number of major decisions were developed in 'informal chats' between principal and staff which, while being a form of lobbying, also ensured a collection of a wide range of opinions before decisions were reached. The early and continuous floating of ideas also allowed staff the opportunity to discuss proposals amongst themselves before decisions were taken. New ideas were not sprung on the staff for rapid decision.

We also observed in three of the four 'successful' schools that there was a fair exchange of 'flak' on all sides because teachers felt free to get things off their chests. We did not record such instances in the fourth 'successful' school, probably because no occasion for exchanges of this type arose during our observational period.

The informal and flexible, yet firm, style of decision-making just described may be contrasted with one of the 'less successful' schools where a lack of overall direction allowed the staff to develop their own power groups. The *ad hoc* groups which arose were evident within the staffroom setting, and each group took on responsibilities which they saw as being important to it. The strongest group in the staffroom revolved around a senior teacher. This group fulfilled three functions:

a) *Self support* The group arranged programmes and timetables to support each other. For example our researchers noted that they put their classes together to see films, and developed semi-specialisation via informal exchanges on an *ad hoc* basis. Offers such as these were not made to members of staff who were not identified as group members.

b) *Ran Programmes* Individual members of the group volunteered for duties and responsibilities. For example, on a sports day one member assumed responsibility for arranging programmes and teacher duties, but the whole group rallied around to help. Again the help was not given to non-members of the group.

c) *Provided Counselling* The group supported its members and provided willing listeners and helpful counselling. One teacher remarked in an interview that if the group ever broke up she would leave the school. This group also provided a social context after school hours, and as well, co-operated in school projects if it decided they were worthy.

There was some concern amongst other staff members about the degree of power this particular group exercised, and the principal made several attempts to break it up, or at least to modify it, by informal counselling and by rearranging seating in the staffroom. These efforts failed. The general feeling of our observers was that in the absence of leadership by the principal, various informal power centres developed. The danger of this development was, as has been noted above, that some teachers felt isolated and were not involved in decision making. Thus much time was spent on power-plays rather than planning educational matters. We have reported this phenomenon in some detail as it emphasised the strength of the dialectic in such schools. We would note that a dialectic operated in *all* schools investigated; however in the 'less successful' schools the situation was typified by a good deal of argument, suspicion and disintegration of purpose.

Two other observations deserve reporting. First all four 'successful' schools had principals with reputations of achieving what they said they would achieve. Our observations provided ample evidence that some principals had a greater capacity for 'delivering the goods' than others, and this had in fact become part of the 'folk-lore' of those schools we have labelled 'successful'. This is not only applied to staffing and provisions, but also to children and discipline. One teacher explained it in the following manner: 'The principal is very good. He always gets straight into things and the children know he won't give up.' The successful principals were fully aware of the effect of their reputation on their staff's morale. One principal commented to our field workers that his reputation became established when his staff discovered that he '". . . twisted someone's arm at the Board" to get a piece of equipment'.

Second, three (and we suspect four) of the 'successful' schools had principals who were firm enough in their convictions to be quite prepared to 'ease out' staff members who did not conform to the set of principles outlined above, or who were unable to cope successfully with the multicultural nature of the school. In three of the successful schools studied there were cases reported where such 'easing out' had been deemed necessary. For example a teacher had this to say:

> X . . . is causing a lot of stress both for other teachers in her area, the Senior Teacher and the children, because of her inability to work

> effectively with the children. She engages in a lot of hitting and voice raising, and the school has received complaints from parents. It is the general opinion amongst the Senior teachers that she will be shown the Gazette (by the principal).

The teacher referred to later accepted a transfer, and is typical of several other cases referred to in the field notes. Teachers unwilling or unable to fit into the overall philosophy were quickly identified and steps were taken either to remediate or to prune the nonconformist branch! In the fourth 'successful' school no such incidents occurred to either confirm or deny the suspicion voiced above.

In summary 'successful' schools had a curious blend of teacher involvement in decision making, but also had leaders who were prepared to make, and take responsibility for, a final decision. In many respects such schools were operating their own 'grounded theory'. No decision was ever final and was subjected to review as further evidence on it emerged. By contrast decision making in 'less successful' schools was seldom by consensus. Unilateral decisions were often made by senior staff, but such decisions were often ignored or violently opposed by existing pressure groups. Decisions were *ad hoc* rather than grounded in any theory or ideological position.

4. Records of pupil progress

Perhaps reflecting the schools' philosophy of placing the onus on teachers to succeed, 'successful' schools carefully maintained records of children's progress which were used as a form of positive reinforcement for both pupils and teachers.

It is noticeable that in 'successful' schools every effort was made to underline pupils progress by rewarding every piece of good work done by pupils. This often took the form of making a conscious effort to comment favourably each day on at least some aspect of each child's work, through to fairly elaborate records systems open to public display. In one 'successful' school we recorded the following instance:

> After lunch the principal comes to talk to the classroom and singles out the children who have recently moved from Area A. He tells them that they are really growing up now. He has with him a girl from another area who has done some 'lovely' maths work, he shows this to the children and tells them that she was in this area last year. He asks if anyone has been very good today and Benjamin—who is no angel—says 'Peter helped me with the cleaning up at lunch time'. The Principal takes Peter with him and he returns beaming with a merit certificate to take home. Benjamin is pleased too!

Merit certificates in the schools we observed took many forms and were awarded for a variety of activities. One example noted was the use in a classroom of individual pupil records in the form of a graph openly displayed in the classroom. All pupils had their own chart and individually recorded their daily results. Our researcher observed 'Competition is encouraged by the teacher *within* pupil performance to better, or at least equal, previous scores'.

The question of pressures on pupils which may have resulted from incentive systems and the public display of results, was one that concerned the researchers. It seemed, though, that in the 'successful' schools where knowledge of results was used positively to assist pupil growth, no detrimental side effects were apparent. As one of our team put it at a debriefing session:

> I have personally been very impressed with the combination of relaxed but carefully-structured teaching style with built-in incentive systems. The class is self-controlled but vibrant, keen and not in any way cowed.

In another school the senior teacher of junior classes kept a large chart of all the children's progress in her area. This chart was openly displayed, and from time to time the children's attention was drawn to an individual's record when rapid progress had been achieved. According to our observer the children's and teacher's reaction to this regular review of progress was very positive. Again, the techniques were in line with the principles outlined above and as well appeared to be part of a deliberate strategy designed to maintain a high morale amongst pupils and teachers. The pupils themselves reinforced this viewpoint. All of the children we spoke to said they enjoyed plotting their progress and felt good when they did well. They did not seem aware of any competitive aspect other than competing against themselves.

Other somewhat similar schemes were noted in other schools in use at the senior level. In reply to direct questioning by the researchers teachers at these schools agreed that no child was discouraged should their progress not measure up to that of others. It seems that at the junior level at least pupils are principally concerned with their own results. *Self*-competition was the aspect which was emphasised. In one case it was noted that statistical practice had been modified by the teacher to exaggerate progress—the vertical axis of the graph showing pupil scores had twice the interval of the horizontal! We reached the general conclusion that this regular, evaluatory set of procedures was of benefit to the children as well as the teachers in the more 'successful' schools.

In the 'less successful' schools the system of record keeping was haphazard, although approximately 40 per cent of the individual teachers we observed did practise the techniques just described. The prime difference between 'successful' and 'less successful' schools in this area was integration of purpose. All teachers in the four 'successful' schools were involved in record keeping and reinforcement of pupils work under a team approach whereas in 'less successful' schools efforts were left to individual teachers.

5. The use of community resources and community relationship

'Successful' schools had utilised community resources very fully. This was reflected in a higher rate of parental involvement than was achieved elsewhere in the area. Despite drawing on the same type of parents, the 'successful' schools managed to involve 'parent helpers' at a similar rate to schools surveyed in middle class districts (see Ramsay *et al.*, 1981 for details). This participation was fostered by all the staff who ensured that the helpers were involved and were made to feel useful. Moreover, the cultural skills of the helpers were bought to the fore.

The 'successful' schools had also developed harmonious home—school relationships. School B was a case in point as the following extract from the case studies shows:

> The aims of School B in community relationship is set out in the scheme where the principal has established clearly his role as being 'an ability to establish good working relations with staff, parents and committee'.

Our observations showed that this aim was being fulfilled. For example, the welcoming and induction of new pupils with their parents was a protracted affair, but was an important facet of the school. The principal took time to introduce parents thoroughly, by talking to them, taking them round the whole school and introducing them to all the teachers. All their questions were answered, particularly in relation to open-plan teaching, which caused some parents some anxieties. Subsequent communication with parents was maintained through a monthly newsletter which outlined what had happened and what was going to happen. Typical newsletters included special messages such as dental clinic enrolment for three year olds, school committee news, PTA news, school attendance and examples of children's work. The newsletter was usually signed 'Kindest regards to each of you.' The principal at this school demonstrated his willingness to maintain an 'open-door policy to parents and encouraged them to come to the school as often as they desired. In general the principal maintained a high profile in the community and was keen to get as many parents as possible to participate in the life of the school both inside as well as outside its physical boundaries. This led to involvement in school life at a variety of levels. The school committee was active in fund raising activities such as the selling of T-shirts and chilly bins, cake stalls, bottle drives and an annual school gala. As well as these the Parent Teachers Association ran a cinema in the local hall on Saturdays between 2-4 p.m., charging 80 cents per head entry fee. The principal saw it as important to have close liaison between the staff and parent activities and participated personally in these activities. For example, during our observations, the principal missed only one cinema session. This again was in keeping with how he defined his role: 'Know the parents and build up around the school a community of interest based upon interest and goodwill' (School B Scheme, 29).

Involvement with the school went beyond parents feeling free to enter the school buildings to discuss matters with the principal. Rather, parents were actively encouraged to help in the classroom setting, and a group of parent helpers worked in the school daily. Through these people being available, high use was made of all sorts of factory rejects—paper, cardboard etc. The parents *inter alia* prepared materials, repaired books, listened to children reading and also acted as community and cultural resource personnel. Overall this school had gone out of its way to foster community involvement.

At another 'successful' school good community relationships were fostered by giving parents a 15 page information booklet outlining routine procedures, such as enrolment, and giving various hints and suggestions for parents. For example:

> From time to time we are pleased to report to parents the good things that children are doing. We use the HAPPYGRAMS and AWARD CERTIFICATES for this purpose.
>
> Please take time to congratulate your child and share their pride and joy.
>
> (Information booklet, School L, 4)

There was also a large section under the heading: 'WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN' which was designed to guide parents in helping their children in mathematics, language and other subject areas. Again the positive nature of the project came through:

> Again, I emphasis the co-operative nature of education and parents have a most important share in it. Every teacher can do more with the help of parents than he/she can alone. An interested, helpful parent is a most valuable co-worker.
>
> (Information booklet, School L, 5)

In the 'less successful' schools little effort was made to involve parents. A common complaint was that the school and teachers had tried but the response had been poor. 'We ran a mini-gala—there were more staff than parents present' or 'PTA is a waste of time—you never see the parents you really want to see' or 'Parents won't get involved unless there's booze and gambling'. These negative kind of reactions, which paralleled the pupil expectations section described above, led to a reduced role by the school in the community generally.

6. Successful schools developed a much-used set of resources

The effective use of resources can be hampered by administrative factors. The need for security of equipment, the teachers' knowledge of what is available and the even more basic knowledge of how to operate the audio-visual equipment can become problems. A notable feature of the 'successful' schools was the way they came to terms with, and overcame these problems.

A relationship between ease of access to resources and the frequency of their use was established. An example of how the accessibility of resources affects frequency of their use comes from School K.

> The borrowing of all electronic gear is highly organised and works well with equipment moving freely in and out of the resource area. However, this is not true of social studies and reading resources which are awkwardly placed in an area behind the hall and because they are locked up and the key held by the teacher responsible. Staff get fed up at the hassle of getting them. Consequently these resources tend to be underutilised.

An overemphasis on security of materials appeared to lead to underuse of equipment. This was the case in School U where senior staff members had individual responsibility for various resources. This reduced the availability of the materials to the staff as a whole, and led to frustration and low resource utilisation.

'Successful' schools usually provided systematic training in the use of audio-visual equipment. School L, for example, placed a high priority on staff training, which was appropriate as their inventory included a colour TV camera and monitor. This school realised that teachers not technically inclined may lack confidence in the use of this type of equipment so an adequate training programme was needed to protect the equipment, and, perhaps more importantly, to ensure that staff have confident and positive attitudes towards expensive equipment. Consequently training sessions were held early in the year, and were repeated when necessary. The upshot was that we observed the expensive colour television equipment in frequent use in School L. It was used for a wide range of language and creative arts—school news, both self written and professionally written drama, cultural items and so forth.

The self written plays integrated a great deal of work—language in the script writing; art and craft in the preparation of props and visual effects; lettering in the titles; movement skills, and music. A high level of enthusiasm and interest was being engendered with the pupils taking a great deal of pride in the presentations. We would emphasise that the amount of time spent on preparation and organisation by the teachers was well above that required in conventional programmes, nonetheless the experiment was paying dividends and in the view of teachers '. . . well worth the effort being put in'.

Another interesting experiment observed at School L was the preparation of a training video tape recording designed to demonstrate a reading system. This film involved pupils and staff from the school and the whole effort generated a great deal of enthusiastic effort. The teacher in charge of this project had plans to develop the production of locally made films to meet the needs of the district in which the school was based.

A further finding pertinent to this section was that teachers in the 'successful' schools had significantly more personally owned and personally constructed equipment than teachers in the less successful schools. Full details are supplied in Ramsay *et al.*, (1981).

In summary, the 'successful' schools had a well developed and much used set of resources. The availablitiy of resources was made known to all staff members and simple and effective methods of borrowing centrally stored equipment had been developed. The teachers themselves were on the lookout for fresh resources and ideas and made effective use of available equipment.

7. Improving the school's environment

A further characteristic of 'successful' schools was that teachers and pupils had done a good deal to modify the physical surroundings. While the age of the buildings did not appear to matter, there was considerable evidence that the work of teachers and pupils did. In the 'successful' schools there was evidence of pupils' work being displayed prominently and changed regularly. There was evidence that teachers looked out for special occasions as the focus for fresh displays of work—for example celebration of spring, religious festivals, etc. Our 'successful' schools (and classrooms) were tidier than others, with less littering and an emphasis on 'putting things where one could find them'. There was effective use of plants, posters and pictures as well as foyer displays in the school entrances in our more 'successful' schools. There had been a major effort in our 'successful' schools to develop the grounds to make them more attractive for children, parents and teachers and even in the face of vandalism a determination to keep the grounds and surroundings aesthetically pleasing. At School DD for example, the beautifully kept rose gardens had become a source of pride and had led to extra efforts in other parts of the school grounds.

Conversely we found that the less 'successful' schools had much more graffiti and littering than the 'successful' schools. Our field officers noted that in the less successful schools '. . . graffiti was everywhere, under desk lids, on walls, toilets and particularly on the out-buildings. It's not usually pornographic but is more often about gangs, some teachers, and certain social relationships' (Field Notes). Moreover, wall displays were not as prominent, and where they did exist were changed rarely. In one school no changes were noted throughout the observational period.

8. A supportive, caring environment

In almost all of the characteristics discussed above we have mentioned the existence of a supporting, caring environment in the 'successful' schools. We have placed this in a separate category mainly because we wish to emphasise its importance. The morale of teachers was seen as being especially important in the 'successful' schools, and was carefully preserved by the senior staff. In the less successful schools there was less integration of action, and teachers under stress did not receive the kind of support and counselling as was apparent in 'successful' schools.

The coherence of purpose we noted in 'successful' schools also had a common thread—the teachers in developing a community of interest demonstrated very clearly that they cared about children. This permeated the whole school, which had a pleasant, caring environment where—for the most part—pupils, parents and teachers worked together towards a common goal. We say 'for the most part' as in all of the schools studied elements of conflict and tension in line with the dialectic mentioned earlier, occurred. However, in general a coherence of purpose had emerged, and the children appeared to be working happily in a friendly, non-threatening environment.

Further Characteristics of Successful Schools

There were five further characteristics which we identified as setting 'successful' schools apart from 'unsuccessful'. We have treated these in a separate section as the differences were not as clear-cut as in the eight characteristics discussed above. We offer them, therefore, in a rather more tentative fashion than those discussed so far. Despite this reservation, we believe further investigation would allow them to be added to the 'grounded theory'. First, it was our impression that teachers in 'successful' schools arrived earlier and left later than in the less 'successful' schools. We have no evidence, though, of the amount of work done at home and there was considerable divergence from school to school. Second, some evidence emerged to suggest that the more successful schools involved pupils in decision making more often than in the less successful schools. At all of our 'successful' schools, school councils or the like, had been developed. At School B, for example,

> the children elect a council each term. The council consists of 10 children representing each age group in the school. They meet in the staffroom with the principal once a week, the meetings being chaired by a standard 4 pupil. Each of the area representatives gives a brief report on events on his/her part of the school—visits, 'good things' and notices of coming events. The principal responds in like and under general business, other matters, including school rules, are discussed.
>
> (Field Notes, School B)

In our discussions with pupils at these schools we ascertained that they believed that involvement on these councils was worthwhile and that they had some influence on policy decisions. This was particularly marked at the secondary level.

The 'less successful' schools, on the other hand, while sometimes having representative councils, appeared much less willing to share power with the children in the school. The children, in contrast to those in 'successful' schools, were apathetic about the role of the councils and in one school where a vacancy occurred no nominations were forthcoming for a replacement.

Third, evidence emerged to support the view that the more successful schools had children working outside the classroom in a variety of programmes in social studies and work experience more often than the less successful schools. Fourth, in the area of outcomes, better race relations existed in our 'successful' schools than the 'less-successful' schools. An *ex post facto* analysis of our field notes revealed significant differences in the extent of mixing of ethnic groups during free play situations, fewer playground incidents stemming from ethnic origin and less use of pejorative ethnic language by pupils. Fifth, we gave careful consideration to the attitude of pupils towards schooling. While we did not develop and administer attitude scales to pupils (and indeed are sceptical of such devices—see Mischel, 1968) the contrasts between our two groups of schools were stark. We have already mentioned the fact that punishments were significantly rarer in the 'successful' schools than the 'less successful' schools, which is in itself an indicator of the kind of pupil-teacher interactions. From our observations and discussion with pupils we came to the conclusion that they were interested in the programme—even excited at times—and were eager to achieve personally set goals. In the 'successful' schools, as we have noted above, the students were developing a political awareness of what it meant to be a minority New Zealander, as well as a pride in their own cultural origins. Children in these schools were least alienated from the programme of work. On the other hand the 'less successful' schools endeavoured to maintain order by oppressive techniques. The programme was teacher dominated and maintained by a well known and strictly enforced punishment system, which at the secondary level was typified by suspensions and expulsions. In these schools we observeed a considerable amount of alienation from the programme and a good deal of covert and overt rebellion. The indicators of truancy, vandalism and graffiti supported our conclusion. We include pupil attitudes towards schooling in this section of the findings only because our interviews of pupils were informal. However, the researchers are certain that the differentials noted here and in the full report (Ramsay *et al.*, 1981) are both clear cut and real. Finally, the researchers would recommend further investigation of the effects of what might be termed the 'hidden biographies' of principals and schools. There was no question that the schools we investigated acquired reputations and that in many ways a self-fulfilling prophecy was occurring. We recorded many instances of teachers outside our sample schools (and indeed outside of the district studied) telling us that School A was good to work in and School B was poor etc. Time precluded us from investigating this phenomenon further, but the hypothesis does receive further substantiation insofar as there were more and better qualified applicants for the schools we termed 'successful' as against those we termed 'unsuccessful'. This is an obvious area for further research.

SUMMARY

In summary the findings outlined above would scarcely surprise anyone involved in school teaching. They can be distilled into three brief statements. 'Successful' schools have:

(1) devised a curriculum emphasising forms of knowledge deemed to be important by teachers, pupils and parents;

(2) adopted a pedagogical style designed to match the preferred learning style of pupils, together with an onus on the teaching staff to succeed and a willingness to experiment;

(3) an organisational style in which a common purpose was articulated, communication patterns were two way and meaningful, and where power, especially in decision making, was shared by staff, parents and pupils. Teachers in these schools were, in effect, operating their own 'grounded theory'—they had developed a plan of attack jointly, which while being accepted as the best possible approach for the moment was being constantly revised in the light of emerging data.

DISCUSSION

Despite the unsurprising nature of these findings we believe that our work should cause reconsideration of the two other major empirical works in this general field referred to in the introduction—Anyon (1981) and Rutter and his associates (1979). In both instances our findings provide some supportive material, but, as well, cast doubt on some of the writers' conclusions. In Anyon's case we found evidence which supports her conclusion that schools can be agencies of transformation. We have noted the oppressive nature of the 'less successful' schools, and would agree that children in such schools are learning how to 'buck the system' and are developing techniques which may lead to alienation and conflict. While there is a gap between rejection of *schools'* values and rejection of *society's* values, there was some evidence from our study to demonstrate that children, in reacting against the oppressive systems of control were prime candidates for joining street corner gangs in metropolitan Auckland. A study of such gangs is an obvious follow-up to the present study. However, in contrast with Anyon's findings, we discovered that—while being no less political—our 'successful' schools were aiming at transformation of the community through changing people's attitudes towards cultural pluralism. Although not explicated in such terms, teachers in these schools were adopting a phenomenological position by encouraging reflection, and through thought, the occurrence of praxis. The explanation for this divergence from Anyon's finding may well be one of sampling, but we would note that it is probable that class consciousness is much less developed in New Zealand than is ethnic consciousness. Despite, some very useful attempts by neo-Marxists like Bedggod (1980) and Spoonley (1982) to develop theoretical frameworks, there is no firm empirical evidence yet available to demonstrate that the casual observation that the prevailing view in New Zealand that 'Jack is as good as his master' is false. We did find, in our interviews with parents, conducted subsequent to the observational section of the research reported here, that they placed an almost pathetic faith in the ability of the school to promote social mobility. We say 'pathetic' in the light of the long line of studies in New Zealand which demonstrate the school's failure to act as an equalising agent (see Forster and Ramsay, 1969 and McPherson, 1977 for examples). We also believe—again from casual observation rather than systematic study—that the trend noted by McGee (1969) of a clustering of similar socio-economic groups together in our larger cities has intensified, and that a similarity of attitude, thought and belief of the groups so clustered may appear shortly. This is another obvious area for further research.

Our findings from the 'less successful' schools also support Anyon's point of the presentation of non-integrated knowledge and the presentation of facts which lacked meaning for the children concerned. In this sense her findings support a reproductive position, with schools acting to maintain the status quo. Once again though, our support is only partial, as the teachers at the 'successful' working class schools had in fact modified the curriculum, after consultation with parents and children, to a quite marked extent and in a way which maintained integrity with the children's culture. For the moment then, we would argue that if Anyon's sampling had been extended to a wider range of working class schools she may have found as we did, a divergency of attitudes and approaches. This conclusion is, of course, supported by our findings that 'successful' schools 1) changed the 'official' forms of knowledge, and involved parents—an obvious omision in Anyon's study—and pupils in the change 2) modified their modes of pedagogy and 3) operated a joint decision making process.

In discussing Rutter and his associates' findings we would note from the outset that we have very serious reservations which are detailed elsewhere about the style and approach of their research (see Ramsay *et al.*, 1981, 222-224). In particular, we agree with Young's (1980) observation that Rutter and his associates were too preoccupied with organisational and management matters, and ignored questions relating to the curriculum which was treated as unproblematic. Thus multiculturism does not emerge as a significant feature in their work. In the light of our own findings this is astonishing, especially as Rutter's sample schools were just as multi-ethnic as ours. One of the key aspects to emerge from our research was that the deliberate adaption of the curriculum, and the equally deliberate consciousness-raising of the pupils in some schools was a crucial element in their success. The schools which had developed happy, caring environments were not providing 'more of the same', but were experimenting with quite radical approaches. Incidentally, in view of the changes in the forms of knowledge emphasised by such schools, it is interesting to note that children from the 'successful' schools were achieving better in nationally standardised attainment tests than in comparable schools which were trying to 'match' school knowledge with 'official' knowledge. We return to this point in a moment.

Given this major reservation, our findings are consonant with Rutter's, and also those of Wynne (1981) and Owen (1975), namely that good organisation and leadership are essential components in the operation of a 'successful' school. Our study has indicated, though, that bureaucratic control with centralised power was not favoured by teachers or children, but rather that a flexible and ostensibly democratic system, based on principles of grounded theory seemed to be optimal. This is in line with one of Schutz's (1971, 1973) prime postulates, that while a basis for action is required, decisions must be constantly re-assessed in the light of emerging data. We would re-emphasise, though, that running a tight ship is not sufficient in itself to ensure a 'successful' school; matters relating to the curriculum are of prime concern.

Our findings differ to both Anyon's and Rutter's in one further respect. Both pieces of research present a much more homogenous picture of schools than was the case in our study. We have reported on the dialectic we found in all of our sample schools and the tensions and conflicts which arose. We are of the view that this exists in all schools. Anyon (1981, 7) hints as much when she observes that one teacher in her sample was experimenting with diacratic reading, a technique not viewed as being suitable by other teachers for use with working class children. At least one teacher appeared to be swimming against the tide. In our study we followed up carefully on such teachers. (see Ramsay, 1982 for a detailed account of the methodology employed), and believe that Anyon should have done so also. Both Rutter *et al.*, and Anyon present case studies of schools which are too neat, too tidy and too orderly to be accurate. The daily dynamics, tensions, conflicts and changes, which in our view typify most schools, do not come through clearly at all. Nor do we agree with one observation in Cuttance's (1982) otherwise excellent account of school effectiveness research. His suggestion that teachers in 'Australasian' schools (which we take to encompass New Zealand) have greater shared objectives than say schoolteachers in Britain, while not being *disproved* by our study, equally does not receive support.

As we have noted consistently there were differences in objectives, style, approach and expectation not only from school to school but from classroom to classroom. We cannot overemphasise the basic idiosyncrasy of approach identified in our study.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we are surprised that Rutter and his associates do not place their findings in a broader national and historical context. If they had done so they may have reached a conclusion similar to ours—that while some so-called 'successful' working class schools have made a difference when compared with structurally similar schools, in terms of the accreditation system of the society as a whole their performance fell below the national norm. One example suffices to illustrate this point. On the nationally standardised NZCER test in reading vocabulary, 30 per cent of all New Zealand students fall two decites below their chronological age. In our sample the range was 35 per cent to 82 per cent, with a mean of 68 per cent. Similar results were found in the School Certificate examination at the secondary level. The conclusion is obvious—on national criteria even the most successful working class schools were not doing very well. We did not have to look very far for reasons—indeed the prime problem has been explicated in this paper and relates to valued forms of knowledge. One teacher summed it up this way:

> Sometimes I feel that (Principal and 'elite school named) and that kind of clique are saying 'Look our group is in charge of this society. Sit exams that suit our type of people and if you don't measure up you deserve to sit at the bottom of society'. To me this is a recipe for a divided society and greater friction.

Although there have been some attempts in New Zealand to modify the state school, examination papers—Walker (1981) documents, for example, the changes to the 1972 and 1974 School Certificate English papers, which were designed to cater more adequately for Maori students—there is no doubt that the forms of knowledge emphasised in the various tests and examinations are derived from the dominant culture. Viewed in this way it becomes obvious that schools are an instrument of domination. In this paper we have demonstrated the positive changes which occur when schools decide to modify programmes to emphasise forms of knowledge valued by their clientele. In a broader perspective we would argue, along with Harker (1981), Walker (1981) and the authors of *He Hurahi* (National Advisory Committee on Maori Education, 1981), that race relations would be improved if the goal of the school system was to produce multicultural people, in the sense outlined above. Such a change in emphasis may also enhance the job opportunities of minority groups. This would particularly be the case if the knowledge associated with multiculturism came to be valued by employers. This may be realised with the dramatic change in the nature of New Zealand's overseas markets. Trading with Japan, the Arab nations and South-east Asian countries is very different to trading with Britain. There is already some evidence emerging that monocultural New Zealanders, mostly of British descent, have some difficulty in adapting to the different trading systems of the countries mentioned.

These humanistic and pragmatic concerns may be begging a major question first raised in New Zealand by writers like Bedgood (1979) and Harker (1981). Changing the emphasis of the forms of knowledge currently accepted as school's knowledge may be part of the way forward; however, real answers may be found in areas such as who controls the modes of production. Put simply, New Zealand's capitalist economy has reached the point where a major gap between rich and poor has emerged (Bedggood, 1981) and, as has been suggested above, we may be poised to develop clear-cut social class distinctions. So-called egalitarian policies have failed to prevent this phenomenon. Yet, like all nations New Zealand is vocationally interdependent, both internally and externally. What must happen now is a fresh appraisal of the reward structure of the vocations, and an even closer look at the current distribution of wealth. It is the view of the present writers that discussion of both these areas should be central in the prescribed school curriculum. As unemployment increases, as class and ethnic tensions increase in New Zealand, public awareness of the politics of control becomes essential. A useful beginning can be made in schools. Where attention could be given not only to essential questions like 'who controls', but also to a more honest appraisal of the contribution of various reactions to the overall wellbeing of the community. When New Zealanders begin to realise that the calling of say, a refuse collector, is just as honest and important as that of say, a lawyer, an important breakthrough point will have been reached. This fundamental change to the school curriculum would, in our view, allow the schools to perform a transformational role rather than being merely reproductive.

The present study represents a small beginning in New Zealand towards answering the many questions arising from the sociology of knowledge perspective. It is essential now for New Zealand sociologists to follow up on this beginning and to build on the 'grounded theory' offered. Nash (1982) has also emphasised the importance of such studies and concludes rather pessimistically that it is improbable that funds will be readily available to conduct such research. We hope he is wrong.

NOTES

1. A much more detailed and specific critique of Anyon's work is to be found in Ramsay (1982).
2. We were aware of the pitfalls of the 'grounded theory' approach through our contact with the research of a colleague in the area of beginning teaching (Battersby, 1981). His thorough review of the literature on grounded theory alerted us to some logical inconsistencies, and also to the problems of 'presentism' in grounded theory. See Ramsay (1982) for an elaboration.
3. It should be noted that Southern Auckland is not as homogeneous as some outsiders believe; indeed scattered throughout the district are pockets of home-owning middle class occupational groups (Pakeha, Pacific Islander and Maori). Care was taken to eliminate those schools from the sample of eight where an over-representation of such groups appeared to occur.
4. The NZCER Progressive Achievement Tests cover areas of reading skills (comprehension and vocabulary), listening skills and computation. All are in the English language. PAT reading tests can be used to compare children's rate of reading (although the manual is at pains to point out on page 17 that this is not the designed functions of the test). It would be interesting—although perhaps misleading—to relate these categories to the various organisational structures identified within the 'successful' schools. We say misleading as we suspect that the reasons for success or failure (as we argue below) are multidimensional, and that univariate analysis may not be particularly helpful. Moreover some of the key characteristics of 'successful' schools could not be quantified to allow for any meaningful form of multivariate analysis—as Rutter and his colleagues (1979) probably now realise (See Tizard *et al.*, 1980 for an extension of this argument.)
5. The importance of the inverted commas should be noted. As we report below there was a considerable variety of practice *within* the schools we investigated. A constant dialectic emerged which made generalisations difficult. See Ramsay, (1982) for a more detailed discussion.
6. Analysis of classroom observations revealed the following figures: In the four 'successful' schools less than thirty per cent of the time was spent on teacher talk, copying and sentence completion. Pupils spent more time than in 'less successful' schools on individual and group projects (40 per cent of time versus 10 per cent) and on creative language-arts programmes.
7. We observed two distinct types of clique in the 'less successful' schools. The first, and more frequent type, hinged on friendship structures, and while primarily social spilled over into the day-to-day activities of the school. In one intermediate school, though, a clique formed which held educational beliefs contrary to the senior staff. During our observation period members of this clique made two attempts to generate changes; both were thwarted by a refusal on part of the principal to place the topics on the agenda of formal staff meetings. Forced back into their own clique, the group developed strategies for operating within their own philosophical frame in the school. In the long term this may be a transformative force in the schools. This is an example of the dialectic which we discuss further below.

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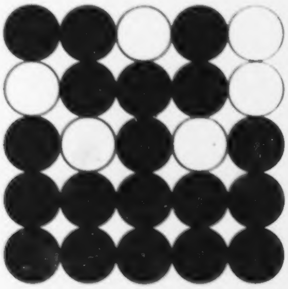
Annotated bibliography



Abercrombie, N., & Urry, J. *Capital, Labour and The Middle Classes.* Allen & Unwin, London, 1983.
Compares and contrasts Weberian and Marxist theories of class, with special emphasis on the middle classes. Argues a case for a 'service class' which has a causal effect on the structure of class relations.

Anderson, D. S., & Vervoorn, A. E. *Access To Privilege.* Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1983.
Up-to-date survey of higher education in Australia in relation to 'privilege'. Provides a wealth of statistical material as well as a compact review of relevant Australian literature.

Blowers, A., & Thompson, G. (eds). *Inequalities, Conflict and Change.* Open University Press, Milton Keyes, 1976.
Series of readings on meaning of inequality, types of inequality and political responses; strong collection of articles and abstracts raise relevant issues, positions. Introductions to sections are helpful.

Boudon, R. *Education, Opportunity and Social Inequality.* John Wiley, New York, 1974.
Outlines primary and secondary effects of stratification that produce educational inequalities; thus sub-cultural differences and position in the class structure and educational outcomes are interdependant; has interesting views on counter measures such as a common compulsory curriculum.

Collins, R. *The Credential Society.* Academic Press, New York, 1979.
Discusses the relationships between school learning and work: demonstrates weaknesses in the functional arguments that link educational skills to economic needs: a convincing critique of the meritocratic position.

Connell, R. W., Ashendon, D. J., Kessler, S., & Dowsett, G. W. *Making the Difference.* Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982.
A book based on interviews with, 'ruling-class' and 'working-class' families and teachers in schools. Argues the special importance of school-family connection in maintaining inequalities.

Hall, S. *Review of The Course.* Open University Press, Milton Keyes, 1977.
A basic reference for the reproduction, school/society link arguments. Provides tight summaries of Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis, Bernstein and critiques. Relies on prior knowledge of the areas and authors under review.

Halsey, A. H., Health, A. F., & Ridge, J. M. *Origins and Destinations.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980.
Empirical study of over 8000 English and Welsh males which confirms class and educational inequalities relationship but interrogates theory (e.g. Boudon, Bourdieu) in novel ways. Is rather pessimistic suggesting that conditions outside the schools have more effect than those within schools.

Hurn, C. J. *The Limits and Possibilities of Schooling.* Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1978.
Reviews liberal and radical arguments about school/society links; critically evaluates equality of education concept and theories of education inequalities. Addresses problems of change in education against limits and possibilities of schooling.

Persell, C. H. *Education and Inequality.* Free Press, New York, 1977.
Notable for attempt to provide theory and empirical findings; links school and teacher practices with structures of domination.

Phillips, D. L. *Equality, Justice and Rectification.* Academic Press, London, 1979.
A *tour de force* in normative sociology: reviews the ideas of equality, social justice and equity in a sociological/philosophical framework. Uses Rawls and Nozik to construct a rectification position on equality.

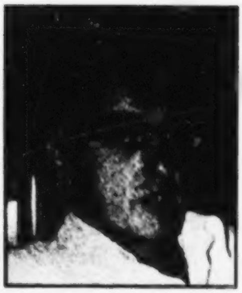
Rae, D. et al. *Equalities.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981.
Presents an analytical treatment of the key concept of equality and related terms: shows the different meanings of equality and their interconnectedness. Provides a good basis for the analysis of equality.

Troy, P. M. (ed.). *A Just Society?* Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981.
Multidisciplinary approach to equality and its explanation; good introduction to perspectives for the analysis of equality in historical/cultural/economic/philosophical/and legal frameworks.

Tyler, W. *The Sociology of Educational Inequality.* Methuen, London, 1977.
Surveys the meanings of equality in education; outlines the major theoretical positions in the inequalities in education debate and reviews the major research in the field. A readable primer in the inequalities field.

Western, J. S. *Social Inequality In Australian Society.* Macmillan, Sydney, 1983.
A compendium of inequalities in Australian society. Provides an extensive collection of statistical data and comment. Organised according to types of inequalities.

About the author



Richard Smith completed his BEd and BA (Hons) at the University of Queensland after teaching in Papua New Guinea. His PhD, in the anthropology of education, studied the relationships between school and village cultures in a Papua New Guinean setting. He taught at the Canberra CAE before taking up his present position at the University of Queensland. His main interests are the relationships between educational practices and society; culture theory and critical policy studies.

Acknowledgements

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